THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

CLOSE BATTLE AT THE 98TH OSCARS

Two frontrunner films *One Battle* and *Sinners* have a chance of breaking the all-time Oscar wins record

Best director: ● Reports quoting Oscar insiders said the Academy is likely to honour *One Battle* director Paul Thomas Anderson but *Sinners* director Ryan Coogler is equally deserving ● Coogler could become the first-ever Black person to win Best Director in the 98-year history of the Oscars | P11

Best film: Leonardo DiCaprio-starring political thriller One Battle is neck-and-neck with Michael B Jordan's bluesy vampire horror *Sinners*

Best actress: A sure thing appears to be best actress nominee Jessie Buckley, who plays William Shakespeare's wife in *Hamnet*

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POLL SEASON BEGINS

Election dates for Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry announced

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@ New Delhi

CHIEF Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Sunday announced the polling schedule of four states and one Union territory, setting the stage for high-stakes electoral battles that could impact the political future of the ruling TMC in West Bengal, DMK in Tamil Nadu, BJP in Assam, and CPI(M) in Kerala.

Assam, Kerala, and Puducherry will go to polls on April 9, while Tamil Nadu will have voting on April 23. West Bengal will vote in two phases on April 23 and April 29. The results, for all, will be out on May 4.

The model code of conduct has come into effect immediately with the announcement.

Out of West Bengal's 294 constituencies, 152 assembly segments will vote on April 23 and the remaining on April 29. The two-phase polling in West Bengal marks a significant shift compared with the 8-phase election in 2021. To ensure peaceful voting, the ECI has deployed the highest ever deployment of security forces in the state.

West Bengal, held by Mamata Banerjee-led TMC since 2011, is headed for a fight to finish as the BJP is trying hard to win by raising law and order, infiltration, corruption, and appeasement politics as poll issues. "This election is more crucial for us than contests in other states," a BJP leader said.

In Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK is facing stiff challenge from the AIADMK-BJP alliance, while actor Vijay-led TVK's entry may also upset poll calculations.

The Congress is confident of winning Kerala, currently held by the CPM which is eyeing a third term, while the BJP is also fancying its chances of making a breakthrough.

BJP-ruled Assam is another state the Congress is trying to stage a comeback.

In Puducherry, the ruling AINRC-BJP coalition is hopeful of retaining power as the DMK-Congress alliance is still in seat-share talks.

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar during a press meet in Delhi | PTI

2 BYPOLLS IN STATE ON APRIL 9

ECI announced bypolls for eight seats in six states. Bagalkot and Davnagere South in Karnataka, Goa's Ponda, Dharmanagar in Tripura and Nagaland's Koridang will vote on April 9; Gujarat's Umreth and Maharashtra's Baramati and Rahuri on April 23

POLL SCHEDULE

APRIL 9
Assam
126 seats

Kerala
140 seats

Puducherry
30 seats

APRIL 23
Tamil Nadu
234 seats

April 23 & 29 (2 phases)
West Bengal
294 seats

RESULTS
MAY 4

824
Seats across 4 states and 1 Union Territory

17.4 crore
Voters eligible to cast votes

Didi clears DA dues, hikes clergy pay just in time

SUBHENDU MAITI @ Kolkata

MINUTES before the Election Commission announced the Assembly election schedules in four states and Puducherry on Sunday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in poll-bound West Bengal announced a hike in honorarium for purohits and muezzins, and the clearance of Dearness Allowance (DA) arrears to state government employees.

She made the announcement on X at 2.40 pm, 80 minutes before the 4 pm press conference by the Election Commission to announce the poll schedule. Once the election is declared, the model code comes into effect, and such announcements are not permitted.

"I am pleased to announce an increase of ₹500 in the monthly honorariums extended to our purohits and muezzins," she wrote on X. Addressing state government employees, she said, "They will start receiving their ROPA 2009 DA arrears from March 2026 onwards."

BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari called Mamata's announcement a "desperate last-minute poll gimmick". It comes amid a standoff between the state government and its employees. The Supreme Court had directed the government to pay a portion of the DA arrears by March 31. P10

Iran keeps up hard talk, open to negotiations on Strait of Hormuz

AGENCIES @ Tehran / Tel Aviv

IRAN on Sunday threatened to widen the war while sending a stern message to its Arab neighbours that it has "ample evidence" that US bases on their territories were being used to launch attacks.

"This war will end when we are certain that it will not be repeated and that reparations will be paid," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told a news website.

His remarks came on the 16th day of the war that has jolted energy and oil prices across the world. On Sunday, at least eight people were injured in Israel following missile launches from Iran even as even as Israel kept up strikes on Lebanon.

70 MEDICAL STUDENTS RETURN TO NEW DELHI

New Delhi: Nearly 70 out of 101 medical students who left Iran on Saturday reached Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport on Sunday via Armenia and Dubai. Upset and angry with the Indian government not bearing their travel and boarding expenses, the students refused to speak to newspersons waiting to meet them | P9

DAY 16 WAR WATCH

Araghchi said Iran was ready to talk to countries that want safe passge through the Strait of Hormuz.

An Indian-flagged crude tanker sailed out safely from UAE's Fujairah after loading oil on Sunday. *Jag Laadki* is the fourth Indian-flagged vessel to have come out of the war zone unharmed. P11

K'taka ups domestic, auto, commercial LPG supply

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Karnataka, said LPG supply across the state has improved, including auto LPG and commercial cylinders, to avoid disruption of public transport and essential services. Over the past three days, 11.41 lakh domestic cylinders and 20,941 commercial and auto LPG cylinders were distributed. Authorities also seized cylinders and filed five FIRs in multiple districts over illegal storage, transport and misuse.

In a press release, the department said oil companies have improved LPG distribution by about 20 per cent over the past three days, following directions from the Union government. The move is aimed at ensuring that public transport services, particularly autorickshaws that depend on auto LPG, continue operating without disruption. The department added that the increased supply would ensure that essential services are not affected. CONTINUED ON P6

EXPRESS READ

2 held for bid to bribe Odisha MLAs: DKS

BENGALURU: Deputy CM DK Shivakumar on Sunday said two persons were held for offering Rs 5 crore bribe to Odisha Congress MLAs staying in a resort near Bengaluru, to cross-vote in the Rajya Sabha polls in that state | P4

3 new PSIs die in road accident in C'durga

CHITRADURGA: Three newly recruited police sub-inspectors (PSIs) died on the spot, while two others sustained injuries in a road accident that took place at Heggere in the Challakere taluk of the district on Sunday | P5

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ALMANAC TODAY
• Monday: 16.03.2026 • Year: Vishwavasu • Ayana: Uttharayana
• Ritu: Sishir • Masa: Phalguna • Paksha: Krishna • Tithi: Dwadasi 7.44 am
• Nakshatra: Dhanishta 5.02 am • Moon in Kumbha Rashi • Rahukaala: 07:30 am to 09:00 am
• Gulikakala: 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • Yamaganda: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 18°C | MAX 33°C
FORECAST
Showers late. Mostly cloudy.

Sunrise 06.26 am
Sunset 06.30 pm
Moonrise 04.22 am
Moonset 04.12 pm

DKS alerts GBA hopefuls on SIR flaws

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

DEPUTY CM and KPCC president **DK Shivakumar** on Sunday held a meeting of hundreds of aspirants for Congress tickets to contest the polls to five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) jurisdiction. Addressing a gathering at Bharat Jodo Bhavan of KPCC, he gave a clarion call to the Congress rank and file to be alert on deletion of voters during Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

"I just want to win GBA with more seats. I have formed a five-person committee, including former BBMP mayors. We will form a manifesto. I will call all those who have officially conducted the voter list survey. The SIR poses a big threat as it involves deletion of voters and those who want to vote should apply again to be included in the electoral roll," he suggested. "There is a difference between the State Election Commission and Central Election Commission, and we will discuss SIR in the assembly too."

He informed that the mapping of electors was going on, with 42 per cent having been completed in Bengaluru. After mapping, officials will ask for documents again, he said.

He instructed Booth Level Agents (BLAs) of the party to conduct mapping properly, warning that those who fail to do so will be suspended. "Booth Level Officials (BLOs) who do not cooperate will also face the music," he warned.

As the party has already filed

a complaint with the Election Commission with regard to irregularities in SIR, Shivakumar advised party workers to stage protests if Assistant Returning Officers don't conduct the revision properly. He pointed out that there were instances of members of the same family being distributed in different wards to create confusion, and attributed it to the party's dismal performance during the last BBMP polls.

"There is a Congress government in place, don't worry, maintain your dignity and stage a protest," Shivakumar advised. "Likewise, last year, we didn't get many seats in Bengaluru because of the fraud by Chilume Trust."

'Don't worry about residents'

Shivakumar downplayed the role of residents of apartments in Bengaluru in the polls. "They don't vote, we don't get their votes, so don't worry about them," he said.

He hoped the guarantee committees will work actively during the polls. "We will give smart ID cards to women who travel in buses under Shakti scheme as they should feel it is worth it, as the BJP is also saying the guarantees should be revised," he said.

AUTO UPDATION FAILS

e-Aasthi portal a sham, say property buyers

INDRA S @ Bengaluru

SEVERAL residents in Bengaluru believe that the government's automatic property mutation system is a sham, as it is not functioning as promised. Despite valid e-Khata and Electronic Property ID numbers, ownership updates are not appearing on the e-Aasthi portal. The Aadhaar-based e-KYC also fails, forcing property buyers to visit corporation offices for manual processing, they said.

Preeti Abhishek (name changed) from North Bengaluru, who purchased a property towards the end of 2025, said they were told the mutation would be completed within two weeks. "Since then, we have been continuously checking the status and even lodged a complaint with the customer care number, but there has been no progress," she said. "Eventually, we visited the zonal office and submitted the relevant documents, yet the mutation is pending. If the system is supposed to be automatic, why are citizens still forced to run from office to office?" she questioned.

In another case, Ramesh Kumar (name changed) registered a property on January 23, 2026. Weeks later, when they entered the EPID on the portal, the system still showed "No Data Available". "We were ultimately forced to apply for mutation manually and submit documents at the office," he said.

A resident from South Bengaluru also reported a similar issue, stating that although the property details should have been updated in his name, the portal continues to show the previous owner's details, forcing him to approach the office in person to submit an application. Ateeque Koppal, a social activist who followed up such cases, said, "The government announced the system to eliminate manual intervention, yet GBA officials are still insisting that citizens submit physical documents – the digital system exists only on paper and not in reality."

Responding to the complaints, Greater Bengaluru Authority Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao said the system is largely functioning. "A few people may have individual complaints. That can happen in any system. But by and large, we are aware that the automatic property mutation system is working well," he said.

"There will always be room for improvement. We will definitely look into individual issues and resolve them if any problems are found," Maheshwar Rao added.

Y'pur, Cantt rly stations miss facelift dates

INDRA S @ Bengaluru

THE redevelopment of two key railway stations in the city – Bengaluru Cantonment (BNC) and Yeshwantpur – have missed earlier timelines, with officials now indicating that both projects are likely to be completed only by the year-end.

The works at BNC, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2022, was scheduled to be completed by October 2025. However, the project now stands at only 60% completion, said railway officials.

An South Western Railway official said, "The BNC receives 19,000 passengers daily. It is being redeveloped at a cost of Rs 484.58 crore. The project includes a new main station building on the south side and a second entry building on the Millers Road side."

The redevelopment plan also includes an air concourse, three new foot overbridges, one pedestrian foot overbridge and basement parking facilities on both the north and south sides, the official added.

Similarly, the redevelopment of Yeshwantpur station, estimated to cost Rs 377.86 crore, has also progressed slowly, with only 67% completion so far. The work was scheduled to be completed in July 2025.

On the progress of work, the official said that on the east side of the station, the linen store and Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) buildings have already been completed, and the multi-level car parking facility with space for 90 cars and 88 two-wheelers is under construction. It includes five car lifts, two passenger lifts, an EV charging station, ticket counters and a commercial space. The East Side Elevated Plaza will ease traffic and provide better access to passengers. It will have five lifts and two escalators. The elevated road works are almost finished, with 99% and 97% completion respectively.

Ulsoor Lake revamp on fast track: Cholan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE comprehensive development of Ulsoor Lake, one of the prominent lakes in Bengaluru city, is in progress. Works are being undertaken to improve the lake's surroundings and provide better recreational facilities for the public, said Rajendra Cholan, the commissioner of Bengaluru Central City Corporation, on Sunday.

The silt accumulated over past 25 years is being removed to enhance the lake's storage capacity. This will help raise the groundwater level in the locality.

In addition, a two-level walkway with bund protection is being constructed around the lake, and seating arrangements will be provided for the visitors and walkers to relax. Ornamental grills are being installed along the lake boundary to enhance public safety. A connecting bridge linking the lake area with a nearby park is also being constructed, Cholan added.

The three islands in the lake, which are currently in a deteriorated state, will be revamped and beautified. Also, with the increase in water depth following desilting works, a section of the lake will become suitable for training activities conducted by NDRF personnel. The park beside the lake will also be developed by planting various species of plants to make the surroundings more attractive, he said.

File photo of a walkway under construction at Ulsoor Lake | EXPRESS

NATURAL COOLERS

A local vendor arranges earthen water pots at Konanakunte in Bengaluru on Sunday. With the daytime temperature crossing 32 degrees Celsius, the demand for these pots, which serve as natural water coolers, has increased | KEVIN NASHON

EXPRESS READ

SAPTHAGIRI MBBS GRADUATE CLEARS UPSC EXAMINATION WITH 87TH RANK

BENGALURU: Dr Sayali Bhika Pagar, an MBBS graduate from Sapthagiri Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre (SIMSRC), Bengaluru, has secured the 87th rank in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Services Examination. A student of the 2018 batch, Dr Pagar completed her MBBS from SIMSRC under the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS). Her achievement has brought recognition to the medical college. **ENS**

UNCLEAR LAW: SMOKING GOES UNCHECKED AT TRAFFIC SIGNALS

KEVIN NASHON @ Bengaluru

BLAME the unrelenting congestion or the long waits at signal, but the idleness in between has increasingly become an excuse for people to light up a cigarette. Law enforcers often remain vigilant at malls, railway stations, educational institutions and government buildings to penalise violators for public smoking. However, the motorists are having a "free ride" with no one to monitor them.

The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, and the Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places Rules, 2008, explicitly identify several spaces as prohibited public places for smoking, such as hotels, hospitals, malls and railway stations. Ironically, roads and footpaths, which require extra caution due to the crowd, are not clearly mentioned.

Experts argue that this lack of clarity has created a grey area when it comes to regulating smoking on roads, particularly by motorists. "If a person smokes in a hotel, you complain to the owner; if it is in a mall, you complain to the manager. Who do you go to if a person smokes on the road?" asks Dr Triveni BS, a public health specialist. "Monitoring violators who are on their vehicles falls into a grey area the law has left unaddressed explicitly."

Public health advocates say that despite the vagueness in the regulations, individuals must take initiatives to cope with the urge to smoke while driving, for the sake of fellow commuters. "Not smoking will not cause death; at most it brings restlessness to the smoker. So people must learn to postpone the urge," says SJ Chander, the convenor of the Consortium for Tobacco-Free Karnataka.

For those who are strongly addicted and struggle to control the urge, alternative coping methods may help. "The first step in de-addiction is replacement," says cardiologist Dr Natesh BH, the president of the Foundation for Sustainable Health India (FSHI). "Popping a chocolate or choosing something harmless, even something nutritious, can help manage the urge." Policymakers and innovators, he adds, must also explore practical substitutes or habits that can help people replace smoking, rather than simply asking them to quit something that they are already struggling with.

A motorist smoking a cigarette at a traffic signal in Bengaluru | KEVIN NASHON

Experts also suggested that the authorities can increase vigil at traffic signals and junctions, where they come across riders who light cigarettes.

"There should be a mechanism to report incidents of public smoking, like the Public Eye app, which allows citizens to report traffic violations. Similar app-based mechanisms, or additional features within existing platforms, could enable commuters to report instances of smoking while driving, allowing citizens and law enforcers to work together in addressing the issue," an expert said.

Horoscopes By Holiday

HOLIDAY MATHIS

16th March : Liminal Spaces Two days before the new moon, one day before St. Patrick's Day and in the final days of the Mercury retrograde, we exhale the last breaths of winter. It's low-tide energy. There's a sense that something is about to turn but hasn't yet. In the meantime, tie up some small loose ends. Let the conversation settle. Trust.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Perseverance is important, but so is knowing where to put it. Misplaced perseverance wastes time. Know when to pivot and apply the same actions to a more promising trajectory.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 - May 20)
You're so good at offering practical support instead of sentimental talk. You show love by being useful. Today, you'll put the time in and do what needs to be done. You'll help someone make a decision that will matter even more years from now.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 21)
Everyone is leaning in to listen to you today, so you don't have to do too much to be heard. Your confidence is evident in soft tones. Respect can't be demanded; it has to be commanded. You're doing this.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)
Why would you expect yourself to understand something the first time you experience it? Real learning takes repetition. You circle back, notice more, connect the dots. Insight forms not in a flash but in layers.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)
You have zero desire to take part in transactional relationships in which people are constantly calculating who owes what, who earned what and whether something is "worth it." Real connection doesn't feel like constant accounting.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)
It may seem a situation is nagging at you -- an irritating tone in repetition, an idea looping. Don't just swat it away. Either address it directly or decide to drop it. Lingering halfway only grates on your energy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23)
Gather up inspiration. Input before output. You can't produce strong work from an empty well. Before you create, you need raw material. Deliberately expose yourself to things that stretch your imagination.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 21)
Every time you steer your thoughts to a serene headspace, you carve the route as your own, get better at it and fall into your groove. Serenity is meant for you. You deserve it. Keep using this skill to move toward peace.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)
Some people are busy. Some people are productive. Some people are numb. You'll witness the population of sleepwalkers through your world today and be in a rather classic dilemma over it. Do you wake them up or let them pass undisturbed?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)
Ever the responsible one, it's OK to question which duties are truly yours. Not every problem requires your management. When you commit selectively, your effort carries more authority and your results speak for themselves.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)
Pettiness is one of your biggest turnoffs. You almost always care more about the outcome than about being right in the moment. Today proves why long-term wins matter more than short-term emotional victories.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - Mar 20)
You're picking up on cues others miss -- a pause, a glance, a shift in tone that tells you there's an inside story, even when you don't yet know what it is. Trust what you sense without rushing to put it all together.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

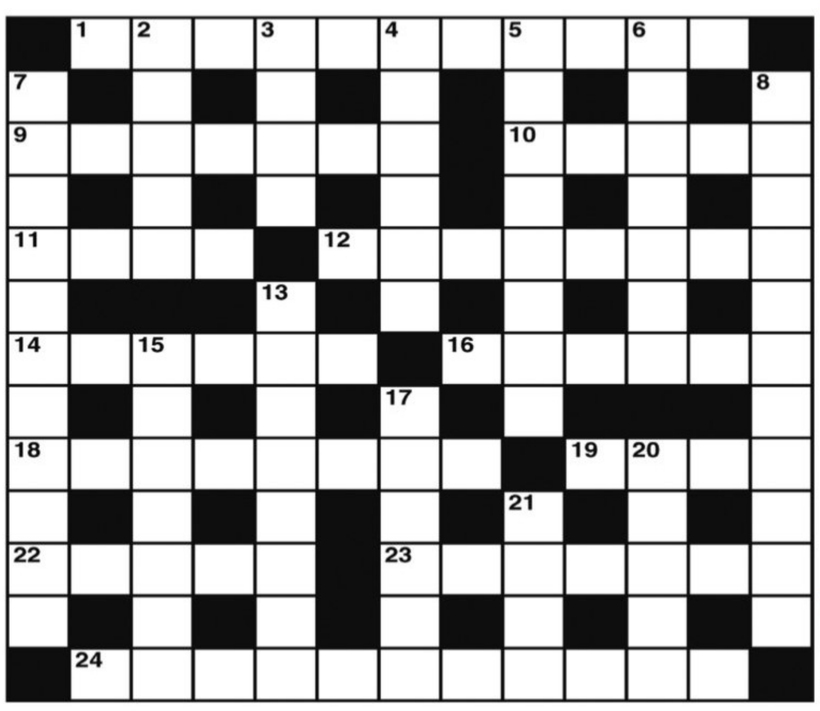
	5	6		8		2		
	9	8	3	6			7	5
2		3			4			
	1							9
		2	7	5	9	3		
9							8	
			8			1		7
3	8			7	5	6	2	
		5		1		9	3	

1	5	4	3	6	2	9	7	8
8	6	2	7	1	9	4	3	5
3	7	9	8	5	4	2	1	6
9	3	5	2	8	6	1	4	7
4	8	6	1	7	3	5	2	9
2	1	7	4	9	5	8	6	3
5	4	3	9	2	7	6	8	1
6	2	1	5	3	8	7	9	4
7	9	8	6	4	1	3	5	2

SUDOKU EASY

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS
1 Tuesday's issue is said to be elegant (4,2,5)
9 Originally a region lived in by our ancestors (4,3)
10 A fruit dish (5)
11 Plenty of items for auction (4)
12 Nobody we know (8)
14 A cycle is available (6)
16 Apply pressure and bar one perhaps (4,2)
18 It describes a man who lacks spirit (8)
19 Revise some taped items (4)
22 Take it and go (5)
23 In a trice he is converted to nonconformist (7)
24 The others get a lecture on home improvements (11)

DOWN
2 Vessel about to break up (1-4)
3 Behold! Morning reveals the rich earth (4)
4 Feast I prepared for a religious festival (6)
5 He keeps telling you it's automatic (8)
6 Won't it give you a free ride? (7)
7 Patriot whose aim was to avert a death in the family (7,4)
8 Brief warning gives little time for action (5,6)
13 Loth to tackle anything not lined out (8)
15 Girl in love we disconcert (7)
17 More reckless kind of slice that's normally cured (6)
20 It's said in France to be the same thing (5)
21 Smart jokes about a king can bring a summons (4)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Hamlet, 4 Asteroid, 9 Nursed, 10 Streaker, 12 Iota, 13 Trust, 14 Hebe, 17 Game of chance, 20 Music teacher, 23 Abel, 24 Aglow, 25 Dean, 28 All clean, 29 Head-on, 30 Turnover, 31 Bridge.

Down: 1 Hangings, 2 Mark time, 3 Even, 5 Satisfaction, 6 Eden, 7 Oakley, 8 Dorset, 11 Cracking pace, 15 Bonus, 16 Eclat, 18 Threaded, 19 Ordnance, 21 Vacant, 22 Dealer, 26 Alto, 27 Year.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

CTPHA

REETX

NIAQTU

MSPIRH

I've got cheese bites, wings and Rocking rolls.
Phones down! It's time to eat.
No more games.
THEY ORDERED STARTERS BEFORE THE MAIN MEAL, BUT THE KIDS WERE MORE INTERESTED IN ---

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: ( ) ( )

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: DROLL MULCH CHANGE KERNEL
Answer: The FBI agents kept questioning the alleged money launderer hoping he'd — COME CLEAN

Udupi CMC received approval to utilise Rs 1 crore under the 'Jal Hi Amrit' initiative of the Union government's AMRUT 2.0 reforms. The fund will be utilised to improve facilities at the existing 12 MLD capacity sewage treatment plant (STP) at Nittoor. Sources in Udupi CMC said that the Rs 1 crore fund will be utilised to install a 66 KV station supported by solar panels at the STP

Instagram friend extorts gold, cash from woman

Victim blackmailed with her private photographs, videos

PRAVEEN KUMAR @ Bengaluru

A 21-year-old BCA graduate was extorted of gold and cash worth Rs 14.5 lakh by a man with whom she came in contact on Instagram a year ago.

The woman's father, M Muniyappa (56), from Samanduru village in Anekal, filed a police complaint against the accused, Praveen, a resident of Kaggalipura, on March 6. Praveen was arrested on Wednesday.

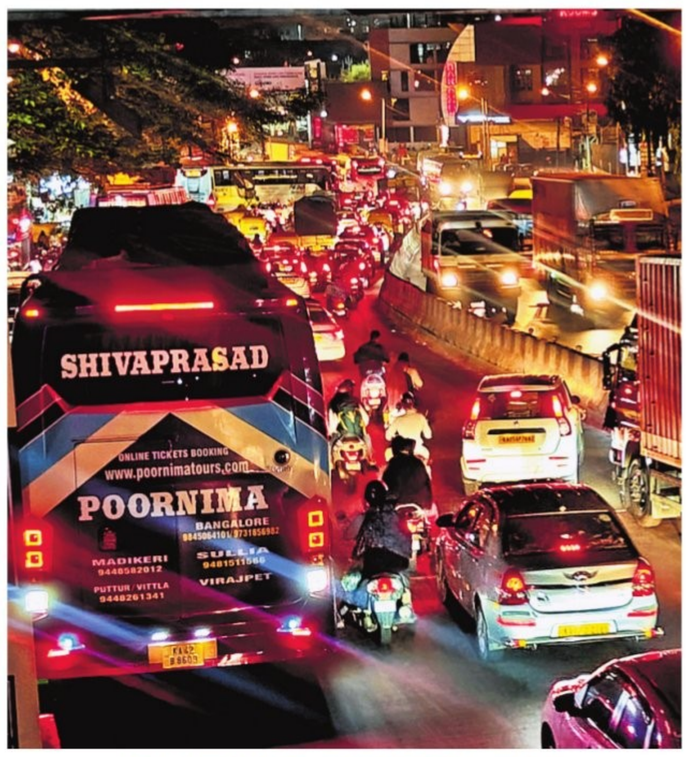
According to the complaint, the woman is said to have been giving ornaments and cash to Praveen since July 2025. The ornaments were being saved for the victim's sister's wedding. The accused is said to have blackmailed the woman with her private photographs and videos, threatening to send them to her family members.

The incident came to light when her father opened the locker to take the cash for the wedding arrangements.

The victim, while doing a project for her degree, came in contact with Praveen, who promised to help her in the project. He started collecting the ornaments and the cash, claiming that he would delete all her private photographs and videos. The victim had given around 200 grams of gold to the accused along with Rs 5 lakh in cash.

"The accused has been taken into police custody in order to recover the cash and gold ornaments. Some cash and ornaments have been recovered. He is not employed and targets women on Instagram and other social media sites. His mobile phone has been seized and is being analysed to check if he has extorted others. One should be extremely careful before accepting a friend request on social media platforms," said the police.

A case of extortion, criminal breach of trust, and cheating has been registered against the accused.



PUBLIC PROBLEM

Private buses parked on the road near satellite bus stand at New Guddadahalli in Bengaluru affect traffic every night | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Fast-moving digital content stunts young brains, say experts

GAYATHRI M KURUP
@Bengaluru

MENTAL health professionals say rising hyperactivity, reduced attention span and difficulty in emotion regulation among children may be linked to increasing exposure to highly stimulating digital content. The bright colours, rapid scene cuts and loud sounds are becoming more frequent in children's programmes. Experts warn that such content may affect how young brains process attention and behaviour.

Early childhood is crucial for brain maturation, and attention, working memory and emotional regulation will still be in the developing phase, they say.

Shilpi Saraswat, a clinical psychologist at Sakra World Hospital, said that constant exposure to highly stimulating visuals can lead to overstimulation of the brain. "When children are repeatedly exposed to such content, it may become difficult for them to focus on slower activities or regulate their emotions, increasing restlessness and impatience," she said.

Counselling psychologist Ann Treesa Rafi said highly stimulating content often provides instant gratification for the brain. "Activities like imaginative play, reading or conversation may feel less engaging," she said. Mental health professionals are increasingly seeing a rise in parents seeking help for their children for behavioural changes, like poor concentration, delayed speech or difficulty with social interaction

Counselling psychologist Shayna Sunu said there has been a noticeable increase in cases of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder among children and adolescents. "By constantly consuming stimulating media, the brain begins to expect continuous entertainment, making it harder for them to sustain attention during everyday tasks," she said.

Abhiram Chakravadhanula, gameplay programmer at Holy Cow Productions, said that retention is a key factor while creating digital videos and animations. "Bright colours, loud music and fast-changing visuals are used because they quickly grab a child's attention," he said. Easy access to videos through platforms such as YouTube has increased children's exposure to such content. Abhiram said, "Older cartoons prioritised storytelling and character-driven narratives. But most of today's content prioritises stimulation over narrative."

Experts say that while digital media is unavoidable, limiting screen time and encouraging outdoor play and creative activities can help support healthier cognitive development in children.

Delhi man arrested for harassing Kerala woman

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Indiranagar police arrested a 39-year-old man from Delhi for harassing a 28-year-old woman from Kerala at a youth hostel in Domlur Second Stage. The incident captured on the hostel's CCTV camera shows him flinging snooker sticks and snooker balls at the woman around 9 pm on Wednesday. He is also seen verbally abusing the complainant and her friend.

The victim from Kottayam, Kerala, filed the complaint in the early hours on Thursday. Acting quickly, the police arrested the accused, Manu Sharma, from the hostel. The woman complained that Manu was harassing her over the last few days to have a relationship with him. When she refused, he verbally abused her. The incident occurred in the games room of the hostel next to the snooker table. She has also accused Manu of making obscene remarks against other women at the hostel and using derogatory language against her.

An officer said, "Manu was arrested on the same day after the complaint was filed. He claims to have come to the city in search of a job. The hostel provides accommodation for both men and women."

A case of assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty under section 74 of BNS was registered against the accused.

CRIME PATROL

Bus driver avoids car, crashes into tree

Belagavi; Eleven passengers were injured after a bus (KA-22 F-2103) lost control and crashed into a roadside tree in Khanapur taluk, Belagavi district, on Saturday. The accident occurred near the government hospital in Nandgarh, when the bus was plying from Khanapur to Beedi. Eyewitnesses said the bus driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle when he tried to avoid crashing into a car that suddenly crossed the road. The bus veered off the road and rammed into a tree on the roadside. The driver of the car that allegedly caused the accident reportedly fled the scene soon after the incident. ENS

Parrot astrologer held for cheating IT official

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A roadside parrot astrologer was arrested by the Bharathi Nagar police for cheating a 55-year-old senior administrative officer at the Income Tax department of valuables worth over Rs 31 lakh. The accused had claimed to perform rituals for the officer's promotion and transfer to a place of his interest.

The victim met the astrologer, Shekar, near Sri Circle, Bharathi Nagar in December last year. As Shekar started performing rituals, the officer gave him 194 gm of gold ornaments and around 1.3 kg of silver along with some cash. Shekar took the ornaments on February 20, claiming that they were necessary for the rituals and they would be returned a day later.

When he did not return the ornaments the next day, the officer tried to contact him repeatedly. But Shekar threatened to harm the officer and his family. He then went missing. After the IT officer filed a complaint, the police traced Shekar to Tamil Nadu. The police are now in the process of recovering the valuables from him. A case of criminal breach of trust, cheating and criminal intimidation has been registered against Shekar.

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE DISTRICT JUDGE, GANJAM, AT : BERHAMPUR

F.A.O. NO. : 22/2022

Miss.Silpa Panda & Others ..... Appellants

Versus

Harishchandra Panda & others ..... Respondent

NOTICE UNDER ORDER V, RULE-20 OF CPC

Respondent No.3

Miss. Abhipsa Panda,

D/o. Tumbanatha Panda,

residing At: Nandigosh Avenue, Jayaprakash Nagar-1st Lane, Berhampur, PS: B.N. Pur, Dist: Ganjam

At present residing at 7/4, Third Cross Road, Jeevanhalli, Cox Town, Bangaluru, District-Karnatak, Pin-560005.

The Appellants filed this appeal against you all the respondents. This Appeal is posted dtd 02.04.2026. You all can appear on the said date in this appeal in this court either personally or through your Advocate and contest the Appeal. Otherwise the appeal will be decided against you all ex-parte.

This paper publication is made under my signature and seal of this Court on this day 23.02.2026

Sd/- DISTRICT JUDGE, At - Berhampur

भारतीय विमानपत्तन आर्थिक विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA)
भारत सरकार/**Government of India**
3rd Floor, Udaan Bhawan, Safdarjung Airport, New Delhi - 110003
Ph.: 011-24695044

PUBLIC NOTICE

STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATION MEETING ON DETERMINATION OF TARIFF FOR THE AERONAUTICAL SERVICES FOR TIRUCHIRAPPALLI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TIRUCHIRAPPALLI (TRZ) FOR THE SECOND CONTROL PERIOD (01.04.2025-31.03.2030)

Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) has issued Consultation Paper No. 06/2025-26 on 27.02.2026 (which is available on AERA website at URL www.aera.gov.in) w.r.t the Tariff Determination for Aeronautical Services for Tiruchirappalli International Airport, Tiruchirappalli for the Second Control Period Tariff Cycle of five years (01.04.2025 - 31.03.2030).

In accordance with the provision of Section 13(4) of the AERA Act, 2008, the various tariff proposals of the Authority contained in the Consultation Paper, are put forth for Stakeholders' Consultation. A Stakeholders Consultation Meeting in hybrid mode (Physical/Online) in this regard is scheduled on **17th March, 2026 (Tuesday) at 3:00 PM** at:

Stakeholders Room, 3rd Floor, Udaan Bhawan, Safdarjung Airport, New Delhi - 110003

All stakeholders like Passengers/Passengers' Associations, General Public, Airport Operators, Airlines, Industry Associations/Bodies, Independent Service providers for Cargo, Ground Handing Fuel Farm etc., are requested to join the said meeting and give their valuable suggestions/comments/views on the aforesaid Consultation Paper on tariff proposal of Tiruchirappalli International Airport, Tiruchirappalli. Participants joining in person may send their confirmation to AERA by 16th March, 2026 (3:00PM) with Name, email address, mobile number, vehicle number by email (to director-ps@aera.gov.in and rajan.guptal@aera.gov.in). Online link will be shared on AERA website (https://aera.gov.in) before the Stakeholders meeting under Tab "News and Announcements.

Sd/-
Secretary, AERA

CBC 03112/12/5025/2526

GTTC — GOVT. TOOL ROOM & TRAINING CENTRE

Rajajinagar Industrial Estate, Bengaluru-560010. Ph: 080-23157189, Fax: 080-23301683, e-Mail:gttc.projects@karnataka.gov.in Website:https://gttc.karnataka.gov.in

No: GTTC/PROJ/CONS/PMC/BD-162/2025-26 Date:13.03.2026

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

E-tenders are invited for Selection of DPR Consultancy Service for GT&TC New Projects for preparation of DPR's. Tender documents are available on KPP Portal from: **16.03.2026** and the date of pre-bid meeting: **23.03.2026** and the last date for uploading documents on the e-portal: **01.04.2026 up to 5.30 PM,** further details can be obtained through KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or Helpline No.: **+91 8023010900, +91 8023010901** during office hours.

Sd /- Managing Director

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Construction Office, Egmore, Chennai 600 008

NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited from the Retired Railway Officers of IRSE (SAG & above) for empanelment as Sector Experts for Peer Review of DPRs who satisfy the eligibility conditions. The eligibility conditions and other terms of references are available in the link furnished below.

www.sr.indianrailways.gov.in
->News&Updates->Construction Organisation

Details of monthly remuneration/ allowances are available in the notification published in the above web site.

Last date for submission of application: 31.03.2026

Senior Personnel Officer Construction/SR

ANNA UNIVERSITY
CHENNAI - 600 025

Admissions to B.E. / B.Tech. / B.Plan. Programmes under Consortium of Industries

Applications are invited for admission to B.E / B Tech. / B Plan. degree programmes under Consortium of Industries Category, offered in the University Departments of Anna University [College of Engineering Guindy (CEG), Alagappa Institute of Technology (ACT), School of Architecture & planning (SAP) and Madras Institute of Technology (MIT)] for the Academic Year 2026–2027 **through Online only.**

Date of notification	16.03.2026
Date of commencement of online application	16.03.2026
Last date for online submissions of application	20.05.2026

The details relating to application fee, eligibility etc., are available in **www.annauniv.edu**

DIPR/320/Display/2026 **REGISTRAR i/c**

गार्डन रीच शिपबिल्डर्स एण्ड इंजीनियर्स लिमिटेड
Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited
(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम / A Govt. of India Undertaking), रक्षा मंत्रालय / Ministry of Defence
Regd and Corp Office: GRSE BHAVAN, 61, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata - 700 024
Web: www.grse.in, (CIN: L35111WB1934GOI007891)

E-TENDER NOTICE FOR ONLINE BIDDING

NIT No.: PUR/OT(PRESS)/ASK/FLANGE/LTA7/STOCK/RA-3417

Sub: Supply of Composite Flanges for Long Term Agreement

Due Date: 06 Apr 2026

1. Details will be available in e-procurement portal **https://eprocuregrse.co.in;** Central Public Procurement Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in/cppp/** and GRSE Website **https://grse.in/tender-published/**
2. Any addendum/corrigendum to this tender enquiry including change in dates, if any, will be published in above websites only.

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BEFORE THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL AT BENGALURU (SCCH-04)
Misc.No. 664/2024 in MVC. No. 2246/2023

BETWEEN:
Smt. Gangadasari Yamini ....Petitioner
AND
SRI SHASHANK GUPTA & ANOTHER....Respondents
SUMMONS / NOTICE TO THE RESPONDENTNo. 1

Shashank Gupta, S/o Chandrakanth Guptha, Riet, No. 993, Sector-M, Aashiana Colony, Near Chiranjivi Bharathi School, Luknow, UttarPradesh.

Take notice that the petitioner has filed the above clam petition against you claiming compensation of Rs. 15,00,000/- due to injuries sustained by the petitioner in a road traffic accident, which occurred on 22.12.2022 at about 9.40 AM, petitioner was riding the Scooty Pep bearing no. AP-28 CB-0285, Opposite to Subha 9 sky Vue Apatment, Byagadadenahalli Village, Anekal Chandapur Road, Anekal Slowly cautiously and carefully by observing the traffic rules. At the time all of a sudden a Maruthi Car bearing No. UP-32 HT-7826, which was coming from Chandapura side towards anekal direction, dashed and caused the Accident.

Hence you are hereby directed to present before this Hon'ble Court on 27-03-26 at 11.00 AM personally or through a pleader duly instructed by you, failing which the matter will be heard in your absence, placing you exparte.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court, on this 3rd day of March 2026.

By order of the Court : Assistant Registrar
Court of Small Cause Bangalore

Advocate for petitioner: Chandra, Advocate, No. 223/4, 1st Floor, Bettaiah Building, Near Royal Enfield Showroom, T. Dasarahalli, Bengaluru-560 057.

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MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER CPD/191 - 2025-26

Tenders are invited through e-Tendering in SRM Two Bid system from the registered vendors for Supply of following:

Tender No. & Description of Material	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs) / Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Due Date & Time (Hrs.) for Submission & Opening of Tender
SP/T-03/0326_TKC1 **RFx 7000039131 (3rd Call)** for Work of replacement of existing 0.2 Panther ACSR conductor by equivalent HPC (High Performance Conductor) along with suitable hardware, accessories and equipment for 132kV Manmad-Chalisgaon Line (line length:72.7 ckm) along with replacement of EHV equipment at 132kV Manmad & 132kV Chalisgaon S/Stn under EHV PC O&M Zone, Nashik.	Rs. 3857.78 (Incl. GST) Rs. 3269.31 (Excl. GST)	06.04.2026 Upto 18:00 Hrs
	25,000.00+GST	06.04.2026 At 18:05 Hrs

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (Gr-TKC1)
CPA, C.O. MSETCL, 1st Floor, Prakashgad Building, Bandra (E), Mumbai
Tel. No.: 022-69852717

Email id: cecpa@mahatransco.in, secpa@mahatransco.in, eepc@mahatransco.in , eetkc1cpa@mahatransco.in

For further details visit our website **https://srmetender.mahatransco.in/**

Any further amendments / clarifications will be published on the MSETCL website **www.mahatransco.in**. & **https://srmetender.mahatransco.in/** . Bidders are therefore requested to check these websites for further updates.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (P&C)

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Certificate Program in Data Science (Advance)

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NISM Campus: Plot No. IS 1 & IS 2, Patalganga Industrial Area, Mohopada, Rasayani, Dist. Raigad, Near Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra – 410222.

Deputy CM and KPCC president DK Shivakumar on Sunday held a meeting of hundreds of aspirants for Congress tickets to contest the polls to five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority jurisdiction. He gave a clarion call to the Congress rank and file to be alert on deletion of voters during Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

'NOTHING SIGNIFICANT IN SIDDARAMAIAH'S BUDGET'

EXPRESS Dialogues

SENIOR BJP leader and former chairman of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) **M Chandrappa** shared his views on the Congress government's guarantee schemes, their impact on the state exchequer and the condition of state-run bus corporations. In an interaction with the editorial team of *TNIE*, a five-time MLA from Bharamasagara-Holalkere Assembly constituency, Chandrappa, also speaks about reasons for backwardness of districts. Excerpts....

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah presented his budget recently. What are your views on that, particularly, the borrowings?
There is nothing significant in the budget. In reality, it shows the government's helplessness. They are forced to take loans because their committed expenditure is higher than the tax revenue. The government does not have sufficient funds for development. The chief minister says he has presented 17 budgets, but there is not even one major project initiated by him that has made big news or significantly contributed to development.

What do you think about implementation of guarantee schemes? If implemented systematically, will the Congress government come back to power in the state?
Different governments launch different schemes. For instance, when Bangarappa was CM, he also provided various schemes to people. In 1994, then CM Ramakrishna Hegde also launched various schemes. Even when BJP was in power last time in Karnataka, we gave people various schemes. But what happened later? It requires just 5-10% of votes to change the party in power or government. People are not satisfied with any number of schemes that the government provides. There is no development in the state because of the schemes.

Have guarantees set back the state government with no development in different parts?
Yes, there is no development because of these guarantee schemes. For instance, Congress MLAs in Davanagere have not been able to get funds and take up development work that I am doing in my constituency. It also depends on the willpower of an MLA to bring funds and invest in the development work of a constituency.

Will BJP continue guarantee schemes if it comes to power in the state?
We might give better schemes to people than this government. Each state is as valuable to the central government as a municipal corporation is to the state government. It isn't a tough task to get Rs 1 lakh crore to Rs 2 lakh crore from the Centre when the same political party is in power in the state.

The financial situation in the state is precarious. Do you think that the next party which comes to power in the government has to pay the debts to set it right?
There will be no issues if BJP comes to power in the state. Currently, the highest amount of funds is taken by Chandrababu Naidu for Andhra Pradesh because of the coalition government. The Modi government will back us financially if BJP comes to power in the state. The amount sanctioned in the state budget is not sufficient for even committed expenditure. We have to borrow loans from banks to fulfill the commitment expenses in the state.

Do you think the budget presented by CM Siddaramaiah is his last?
According to me, it is his last budget and the next budget will likely be by DK Shivakumar as CM.

MLAs often complain they do not receive adequate development funds. Is that true?
It depends on the capacity of an MLA. I have been an MLA since 1994. Over time, officials I worked with earlier have risen to senior positions, and with experience and coordination we manage to secure funds for development.

More taluks fall into the backward category. How can they be improved?
North Karnataka has received funds for 35-40 years, including through the Nanjundappa Report and the Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board. Yet, development remains slow because public awareness and demand are lacking. If people do not question and demand development, even large allocations will not bring meaningful change.

What is your opinion on the diversion of SC/ST funds and the Ganga Kalyana scheme?
Around Rs 44,000 crore has been allocated in the budget. However, funds are being diverted to other schemes like the guarantees, Metro rail and Smart City projects.

For the guarantees alone, about Rs 14,000 crore of SC/ST funds have been allocated, while only about Rs 5,000 crore is kept for social welfare schemes. In 2013, an amendment was made to ensure that funds meant for SC/ST communities are used only for their welfare. But the funds are now being used for other schemes.

You also served as KSRTC Chairman. What did you do to improve the bus corporations?
When I was KSRTC chairman, Covid struck. Earlier, the daily income was Rs 6 crore and it was increased to Rs 12 crore during my tenure. I did not take any salary, TA or DA for three years. During meetings, I would only have half a cup of tea. Earlier, salaries were given based on how much revenue was collected. I made it mandatory that every employee should receive their salary on the first of every month. I also ensured that if an employee opened an account with SBI, they would not have to pay the insurance premium and in case of death, Rs 1 crore would be given to the family. During my tenure, we purchased Volvo, electric, and Ambari Utsava buses, and I personally oversaw their selection.

KSRTC employees are protesting for arrears. What is your view?
They are not asking for arrears; they are asking for the same salary that government employees receive. But it is difficult to provide that. There are about 101-102 corporations in Karnataka. Even today, Rs 1,55,000 crore goes only towards salaries.

The Shakti scheme is being used across transport corporations, but there are allegations of misuse. If your government comes to power, what will you do?
I don't oppose free bus travel for women. When I visited Chennai in 1985, women were already getting free rides there. However, such schemes should not be misused. I had advised former CM Basavaraj Bommai to at least introduce free rides for women within Bengaluru city, but he declined citing budget constraints.

What may happen in the 2028 election?
I am confident that our party will come to power and form the NDA government here.

As a senior legislator, what do you like to suggest to newly elected representatives?
The new batch of elected representatives doesn't commit themselves to serving people. They come with an attitude to earn whatever they invested in elections. In future, politics might turn into a full-time business instead of a means to serve people. It is important that elected representatives' core belief should be public service.

Odisha Congress MLAs offered ₹5 crore each to cross-vote: Shivakumar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A dramatic political event unfolded at a resort near Bengaluru on the eve of Rajya Sabha elections on Sunday, after two men allegedly tried to lure Odisha Congress MLAs, who are in Bengaluru, offering them cash to cross-vote.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president DK Shivakumar said the incident occurred at a resort in Bidadi where Odisha Congress legislators have been put up to prevent them from being poached ahead of a tight contest for the fourth Rajya Sabha seat in Odisha.

The MLAs had been moved to the resort at the request of Odisha Congress chief Bhakta Charan Das amid fears of cross-voting in the election scheduled for March 16.

Shivakumar told reporters that the two men from Bhubaneswar in Odisha allegedly entered the resort and tried to contact the legislators clandestinely. They allegedly offered Rs 5 crore each to the eight MLAs to vote in favour of BJP or an independent candidate backed by it. "A blank cheque signed by a person from Rourkela in Odisha was also recovered from them," Shivakumar said. The two had booked rooms online and were suspected to have been aided by local BJP workers in Bengaluru, Shivakumar added.

Congress leaders claimed that when the MLAs refused the offer, the visitors issued open threats. Alert Congress workers quickly intervened and caught hold of the two men before handing them over to the police at Bidadi. A formal complaint was filed by Odisha Congress MLA Ashok Kumar Das, deputy leader of the party's legislature wing. The police registered a case and started the investigation.

Meanwhile, BJP, however, strongly denied the allegations, calling it a "drama" aimed at creating a political narrative ahead of the voting.

The episode once again thrust "resort politics" into the spotlight. Shivakumar had played a similar role during the 2017 Rajya Sabha election, hosting 44 Congress MLAs from Gujarat at a Bengaluru resort to help late Ahmed Patel win.

Congress MLAs from Odisha meet All-India Congresss Committee president Mallikarjun Kharge at his Bengaluru residence on Sunday | EXPRESS

ODISHA CONGRESS MLAs MEET KHARGE

Congress MLAs from Odisha, who are currently in a resort near Bengaluru, called on AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence on Sunday. They were accompanied by Koraput MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka and Odisha Pradesh Congress President Bhakta Charan Das. Meeting the party's national chief and holding deliberations seems to have boosted their morale, also of the party's ranks and files back in Odisha. It might have also given a shot in the arm for Congress and BJD alliance candidate Dr Datteswar Hota, who also has the backing of CPIM. Karnataka Deputy CM DK Shivakumar said that the MLAs will be flying back to Bhubaneswar on Monday morning to vote in the RS polls.

CABINET TALK

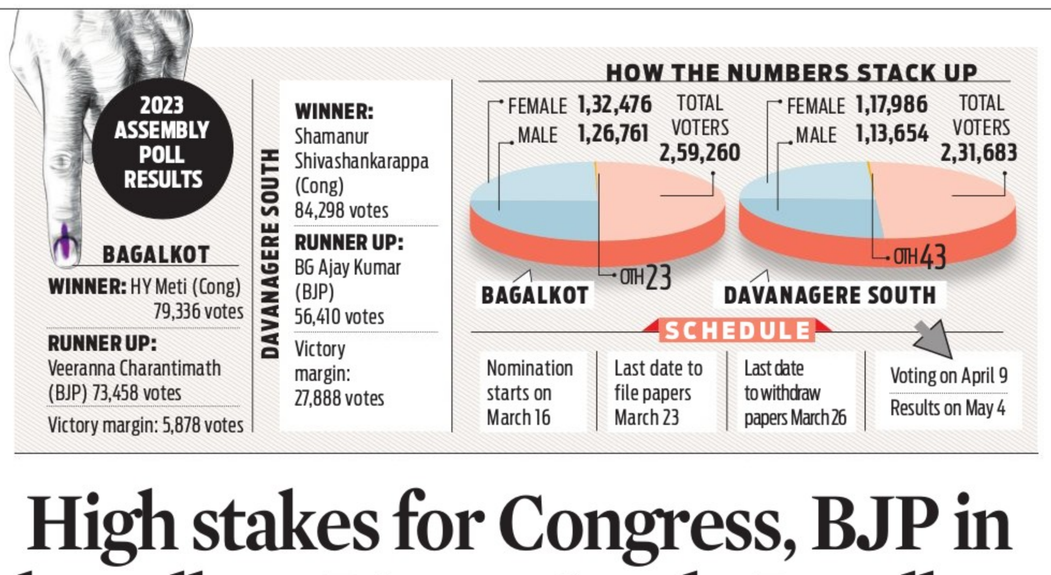
Cong brass nod for rejig likely after polls: Saleem

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Vijayapura

CONGRESS MLC and Chief Whip of the Legislative Council **Saleem Ahmed** has claimed that the party high command is expected to give its nod for a cabinet reshuffle and expansion in May or June after the end of Assembly polls to four states and one union territory.

Saleem told reporters that many Congress MLAs and MLCs have already appealed to the high command for a reshuffle to allow other legislators to become ministers. "Congress leaders had made this appeal and also urged the party leaders to depute 50% of the present senior ministers to the job of party building and replace them with new faces," he claimed.

To a question, Saleem said he too is an aspirant. He, however, claimed that since he is a devoted party functionary, therefore, he does not carry any discontent with the party for not making him a minister so far. Saleem claimed there is no rift between CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar. "Our CM and DCM have already made it clear on record that they are working in complete harmony. Now as far as changing of CM is concerned, it is left to the discretion of the party's central leadership," he said.



High stakes for Congress, BJP in bypolls to D'gere South, Bagalkot

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

THE bypolls to Davanagere South and Bagalkot Assembly constituencies is an acid test for the ruling Congress and the opposition BJP as the results are a precursor to the 2028 Assembly polls in Karnataka.

While the Davanagere South seat fell vacant following the death of Congress MLA Shamanuru Shivashankarappa, a Veerashaiva-Lingayat strongman, the bypoll to Bagalkot was necessitated after the death of HY Meti, a Kuruba leader from the Congress.

According to political pundits, the bypolls would put the leadership issue on the back burner as CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar would be forced to display a united front to retain the two seats for the Congress.

Meanwhile, former CM JH Patel's son and former MLA Mahima J Patel, who is the state JDU chief, is aspiring to contest from Davanagere South, hoping that former PM and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda will hold deliberations with Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and BJP national leaders to field him as the NDA candidate.

With Veerashaiva-Lingayats in considerable numbers in both the constituencies, Karnataka BJP president BY Vijayendra has to prove his mettle as a strong leader of the community, similar to his father and former CM BS Yediyurappa, who is considered the community's undisputed leader. The BJP can cash in on the infighting in the Congress for the ticket, especially in Davanagere South.

Shamanuru Shivashankarappa's son and current Horticulture Minister, SS Mallikarjun, has been fighting tooth and nail to get the ticket for his son Samarth. Sources said that a delegation from Davanagere has already met CM Siddaramaiah in this regard. Mallikarjun's wife, Dr Prabha Mallikarjun, who is an MP from Davanagere, could wield her influence at the national level.

Housing Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan had recently opined that the ticket be given to a Muslim, and proposed the name of MLC K Abdul Jabbar. According to Zameer, there are over 80,000 voters from the community. Given his proximity to LoP in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, Indian Youth Congress national secretary Syed Khalid Ahmed has also emerged as a strong contender, sources revealed. Meanwhile, KPCC chief and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar held a meeting with both the factions a couple of days ago to resolve the issue. "We are prepared to face the bypolls. There is no confusion. All the leaders have said that they will accept whatever the party says," Shivakumar told reporters.

The BJP, in its core committee meeting, discussed the candidates for the bypolls. Union Minister Prahlad Joshi and state BJP chief BY Vijayendra held a meeting with factions led by former minister M P Renukacharya and MLA BP Harish, who were instructed to work for the party candidate.

In Bagalkot, the competition is tough in the Congress for a ticket as Meti's sons, Mallikarjun and Umesh and daughters-former ZP president Bayakka Meti and Mahadevi Meti, are aspiring for party ticket. Siddaramaiah recently clarified that one of them would be picked.

The BJP is most likely to field Veeranna Charantimath, a Lingayat, who had lost the 2023 Assembly polls to Meti by a narrow margin of 5,878 votes.

BJP to launch its poll revival plan with BSY's felicitation

G SUBHASH CHANDRA @ Chitradurga

STATE BJP is drawing up a strategy to revive its electoral fortunes and come back to power after the 2028 Assembly polls. As part of the plan, it is planning a felicitation programme for former chief minister BS Yediyurappa, who has completed 50 years in electoral politics, either in mid-April or first week of May at Chitradurga, the centre point of the state. The party hopes to keep the tempo up till the Assembly elections that are two years away.

Considering the strategic importance of the city, BJP is planning to launch its revival journey from Chitradurga by holding a mega convention, planning to assemble over five lakh people from different parts of the state. Chitradurga MP and former DCM Govind M Karjol said, "We want to felicitate Yediyurappa on his completing golden jubilee in state politics. A mega convention is being organised in Chitradurga. Based on the availability of central leaders, the dates will be decided. We are planning to get Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP national president Nitin Nabin and other national leaders for the programme. The event will also give a shot in the arm for BJP's 2028 poll campaign to come back to power with a majority."

Yediyurappa, who celebrated his 85th birthday last month, started his political career as president of Jan Sangh in 1972, became TMC member of Shikaripura in 1975 and entered Vidhana Sabha in 1983. He was deputy chief minister in 2006 and chief minister in 2007, 2008, 2018 and 2019 for four consecutive times, which is a history.

SOLO BUS TRAVEL BY WOMEN UP 76% IN KARNATAKA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

SOLO bus travel by women in Karnataka has increased by 76 per cent since 2019, reflecting a steady rise in independent intercity mobility, according to a report. The Pink Report by redBus, an online platform for booking bus tickets, based on internal platform data between 2019 and 2025, was released during International Women's Week, and highlights changing travel patterns among women across the state. Karnataka has emerged among the top eight states in India for women's intercity bus mobility. According to the report, the number of women travellers using intercity bus services in Karnataka grew by 103 per cent in 2025, compared to 2019, outpacing the growth of overall travellers during the same period. Women now account for 33 per cent of intercity bus passengers in the state, up from 25 per cent in 2019.

The data indicates a strong shift toward independent travel among women. Solo journeys by women have increased significantly, suggesting rising confidence in travelling alone for work, education and personal purposes. Long-distance travel is also becoming more common among women commuters. The report noted that women account for 31 per cent of passengers undertaking bus journeys longer than 500km.

Young travellers are playing a key role in shaping this trend. The 21-30 age group has grown by 86 per cent since 2019, making it one of the most prominent segments driving intercity bus travel demand. Within this group, solo journeys by women have increased by 71 per cent, further indicating greater independence in travel decisions.

Anganwadi workers across the state have expressed strong opposition to the government's decision to introduce LKG and UKG classes in schools and have warned of an indefinite protest starting March 23 in Bengaluru if their demands are not met

3 NEWLY RECRUITED PSIs DIE IN ROAD ACCIDENT IN C'DURGA DIST

Victims were heading from Bengaluru to Ballari to attend their colleague's wedding

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chitradurga

Amaresh Bargi (29), Sachin (29), Manjunatha Dharimani (32)

THE aspirations of three newly recruited Police Sub-Inspectors (PSIs) were tragically extinguished when they perished at the scene of an accident, while two others sustained injuries in a vehicular collision at Heggere, located in the Challakere taluk of the district on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Amaresh Bargi (29) from Virupapura village in the Sindhanuru region of Raichur district, Sachin (29) from Kuduvalki village in Tirthahalli, Shivamogga district, and Manjunatha Dharimani (32) from Karatagi in Koppal district. The severely injured individuals, Mahantesh Bommannavar (30) from Belgavi and Civil PSI L. Eshwar (28) from Hurulugallu village in Sagar taluk, Shivamogga district, have been admitted to a private hospital in Davanagere.

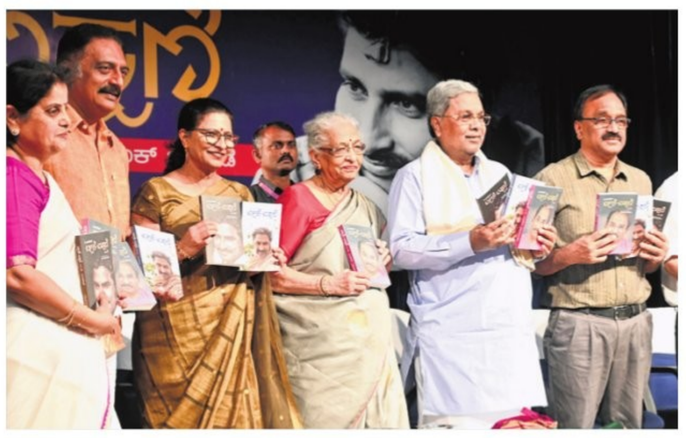
The five newly inducted PSIs were en route to attend the wedding of their colleague Veeresh, who had recently been appointed as a Reserve Sub-Inspector (RSI), taking place at Valmiki Bhavan in Ballari on Sunday.

All five friends had been selected as RSIs in Bengaluru and were currently undergoing training, which was scheduled to conclude within a month, after which they would be assigned to various postings.

The group departed from Bengaluru in the morning for the wedding festivities. However, their vehicle struck a truck, leading to catastrophic consequences as the car became ensnared in the wreckage. The truck driver, who failed to notice the car, inadvertently caused the tragic demise of three individuals and left two others severely injured.

Manjunatha Dharimani, who was nearing the completion of his training, was engaged in security duties for former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, while Sachin served as a VVIP security officer in Bangalore City, and Amaresh was stationed in the City Armed Reserve West, with Mahantesh assigned to the City Armed Reserve North. The three deceased and the two injured individuals were unmarried, with Sachin recently engaged. Sachin, hailing from Tirthahalli, had envisioned marrying after securing employment, having become engaged just two or three months prior, with plans to wed next month, as recounted by his friend Manju. The news of the untimely demise of the three Reserve Police Force (RSI) sub-inspectors in the truck-car collision near Heggere village reverberated with shock among their parents, who hurried to the public hospital. Many expressed their sorrow, lamenting that the lives of these young officers had been abruptly cut short, along with the aspirations of their families.

Imamuddin, the truck driver of Jharkhand origin, whose vehicle was struck from behind, stated that he was transporting an empty lorry to Ballari. He was maneuvering slowly from Tumkur to Jindal in Ballari when he halted the lorry upon realising that the car had collided with his truck.



REMEMBERING LANKESH

CM Siddaramaiah with MS Asha Devi, actor Prakash Raj, Kavitha Lankesh, Indira Lankes and Dr Nataraj Huliyar at the release of the book 'Teeke Tippani' by P Lankesh at Kondajji Basappa Auditorium on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Karnataka records over 10,000 forest fires in 2 months

Mysuru: The summer season is posing serious challenges to the Forest Department, primarily due to the rising risk of wildfires caused by dry, highly flammable vegetation. In a startling development, the state has already recorded more than 10,000 forest fire incidents in just the first two months of this year. Replying to a question raised by MLC Madhu G Madegowda in the Legislative Council, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said that according to satellite-based data, a total of 87,228 wildfire incidents have been reported across the state between 2021 and March 3, 2026. However, the department has claimed that no wildlife deaths were reported in these fire incidents. According to the data, 2023 recorded the highest number of forest fire incidents in the last six years, with 23,685 cases reported. In 2024, the number of incidents declined to 11,163. The minister clarified that the forest fires reported annually in the state are mostly 'ground fires' and not 'crown fires'.

Woman hangs self, dowry harassment suspected

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

A 22-year-old woman has died by hanging herself in Yelahanka New Town police limits. The victim's parents suspect that their daughter, Shruthi, was murdered and the accused have staged it as a suicide. Harassment for dowry is suspected as the cause for the death. A complaint was registered against her husband and in-laws.

The incident occured at her husband Pawan Kalyan's house in Brindavan Layout on Saturday. The couple from Pavagada, Tumakuru, got married in December, 2024. The police have arrested the victim's husband on charges of dowry death.

SUICIDE HELPLINE

If you are having suicidal thoughts, or are worried about a friend or need emotional support, someone is always there to listen. Call Sneha Foundation - 04424640050, Tele Manas - 14416 (available 24x7) or iCall, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences' helpline - 02225521111, which is available Monday to Saturday from 8 am to 10 pm.

Met dept warns of heatwave, docs advise hydration, sunscreen

SUJITHA SHREE N @Bengaluru

WITH summer heat intensifying and ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels on the rise, doctors are warning of an increased risk of skin conditions such as sunburn, heat rash and irritation, echoing a recent alert issued by the IMD. The IMD has warned of an increased likelihood of heatwave condidions from March to May. The department said above-normal heatwave days are expected this summer, and increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation could lead to skin-related issues.

The IMD noted that elderly people, children, outdoor workers and individuals with existing medical conditions are likely to be more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. Authorities have been advised to ensure preparedness by arranging cooling shelters, maintaining adequate drinking water supply and strengthening health surveillance systems. The agency added that it will issue weekly and extended-range forecasts to help administrations plan preventive measures.

The elderly, children, outdoor workers and individuals with existing medical conditions are expected to be more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. Authorities have been advised to ensure preparedness by arranging cooling shelters, maintaining adequate drinking water supply and strengthening health surveillance systems.

Experts note that intense sunlight during summer can significantly affect skin health. Increased UV radiation may lead to sunburn, skin irritation, tanning, rashes and premature skin damage among those who spend long hours outdoors. "Prolonged sun exposure exposes the skin to UVA and UVB radiation, which can penetrate the skin and damage the DNA of skin cells. UVB (280-315 nm) mainly causes direct injury to DNA leading to sunburn, while UVA penetrates deeper and breaks down collagen in the skin. This results in oxidative stress, inflammation and gradual cellular damage. Over time, these changes can lead to hyperpigmentation and premature ageing," said Dr Kanchan Topgi, dermatologist at Sakra World Hospital.

Doctors advise effective precautions such as wearing light cotton clothing, using umbrellas or caps and applying sunscreen (mineral-based with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide) , while avoiding direct sun exposure that causes tanning. They also recommend cooling the body through good hydration and consuming Vitamin C-rich antioxidant foods such as curd rice and fresh salads while limiting spicy and oily meals, said Dr Shantini Vijayasuriar, dermatologist at Manipal Hospital.

EXPRESS READ

Birur police nab inter-state chain snatchers, seize Rs 6 lakh gold

CHIKKAMAGALURU: The Birur police arrested two inter-state chain snatchers and recovered stolen gold worth Rs 6 lakh, on Saturday. The arrested individuals have been identified as Nitesh (21) and Babulal (20), residents of Kalyanpur-Sayata village in the Kaoli district of Rajasthan. According to the police, the crime occurred on Friday when the two bike-borne men parked their motorcycle near a shop at Dogehalli, within the limits of the Birur police station. They initially purchased cigarettes from a woman shopkeeper before asking her to fetch them a pen. When the woman turned her back, the accused snatched a gold chain from her neck and fled the scene.

BCM hostel manager dies by suicide, exact motive yet to be ascertained

HASSAN: A manager of a hostel run by Backward Classes and Minorities (BCM) Department, Lokesh (45), allegedly died by suicide by hanging himself at his residence at Dasarakoppalu village on the outskirts of Hassan city on Saturday night. Police said that the exact reason for the extreme step is not yet known. Lokesh took the extreme step when he was alone in the house as his family members went to a relative's house. Lokesh earlier had served as the warden of two different hostels run by the department in Hassan before being promoted and transferred as the hostel manager of BCM hostel in Channarayapatna.

LOST DOCUMENT

1. Ms. Meern Khullar, R/at Flat No. 202, 2nd Floor, Lake View Residency, 3rd Main, 6th Cross, Sri Maruthi Co-operative Housing Society, Vasanthapura, Uttarahalli, Bengaluru-560061, Mob no: 7338135670, have lost Original Absolute Sale Deed vide Regd. No. BNG(U)-BSK/5532/2007-2008 dated 04.01.2008, Sub-Registrar Office, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the apartment property in Vasanthapura Village, Bangalore South Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District, attached to the Registration District of Bengaluru Urban and Sub-Registration District of Basavanagudi, forming part of Sy. No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 58 & 60 (total extent approx. 45 acres, acquired by Maruthi Co- operative Housing Society Ltd. and approved layout by BDA vide Resolution No. 371/92 dated 19.10.1992), wherein Site No. 85 has been formed, out of which Flat No. 202 on the Second Floor, an extent of 1,050 Square Feet (Super Built-up Area) in the apartment complex "LAKE VIEW RESIDENCY", along with undivided share in Schedule 'A' land (Site No. 85: East to West 40 feet, North to South 60 feet) and proportionate common areas (passages, balcony, lift, staircase, etc.), bounded as follows:

On the Eastern Side: Flat No. 203 On the Western Side: Site No. 86 On the Northern Side: Flat No. 93 (or Open Space as per layout) On the Southern Side: Flat No. 201 (or Common Passage)

Totally measuring 40 feet from East to West (both on North and South sides) and 60 feet from North to South (both on East and West sides) for the underlying site, with super built-up area of 1,050 sq. ft. for the flat.

An E-lost report has been registered, bearing Lost Report No. 2100421/2026 dated 09.03.2026. If found, please return the same to the below mentioned address within 7 days.

Advocate Mohammed Zayed Khan
B302, Aradhana Residency, BTM Layout, Bangalore

QuoteExpress

BE KIND WHENEVER POSSIBLE. IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE

DALAI LAMA

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public are hereby informed that me, the undersigned R. Ravi Kumar, S/o. R. Seshaiah Naidu, residing at E-6 Villa, Ranka Colony, Bilekahalli, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore-560 076 is the absolute owner in possession of property bearing Sy.No.57/57, situated at Hommadevanahalli Village, Beguru Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, measuring 3 acres fully described in the schedule hereunder as schedule property. The said property is within the greenbelt area and continues to be an agricultural land and the same cannot be used for any purpose other than agriculture. When this being the position, Sri.R.Prabhakar Reddy, S/o of N.Rama Reddy, No.1051, 19th Main, HSR Layout, 7th Sector, Bengaluru - 560 034, claiming himself to be the developer carrying on the business in the name of Sai Realtors, has got executed an unregistered Joint Development Sale cum General Power of Attorney on 05-08-2014 from the undersigned, which is not legally enforceable and the said document cannot create any right whatsoever in Sri. R. Prabhakar Reddy, S/o of N.Rama Reddy. Despite the same, the said Sri. R. Prabhakar Reddy has been trying to create 3rd party rights by fabricating revenue documents in respect of portion/s of the schedule property and trying to create 3rd party rights. It is also relevant to note that the land continues to be an agricultural land & cannot be converted or used for any other purpose and is situated with the GREEN BELT area as per Comprehensive Development Plan as well.

Hence, the general public are hereby cautioned and warned not to have any kind of transaction/s or dealings with Sri.R.Prabhakar Reddy in respect of any portion of the schedule property, be it a site or as portion of it. Despite this notice, if anyone have any type of transaction/s with the said Sri.R.Prabhakar Reddy, such transaction/s will be wholly illegal and will in no way bind me or the schedule property.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of dry land bearing Survey No.57/57, situated at Hommadevanahalli Village, Beguru Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, measuring 3 acres and bounded on the East by : Vendor's remaining land and 25 ft. Road, West by : Tank Bed, North by : Ibrahim Khan's land and Road and South by : Uluvalli Boundary.

(R.Ravi Kumar),
E-6 Villa, Ranka Colony, Bilekahalli, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore-560 076.
Bengaluru Date: 16-03-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, **Smt. JYOTHI. B.P** D/o H.N. Prakash, W/o Late G. Nagaraja @ Shiva Prakash, aged about 49 years, residing at No. 363/7, 1st Cross, 4th Main, Vijayanagar, Bengaluru-560040, do hereby declare that the name: **1. G. Nagaraja 2. Nagaraja G. 3. G. Nagaraja @ Shiva Prakash** are one and the same person, i.e., my husband only. Henceforth, all the above names shall be treated as referring to one and the same individual for all legal and official purposes.

"SWORN TO BEFORE ME"
XXXVIII ADDL. CHIEF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE BENGALURU CITY

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client proposes to purchase the schedule property from the owner viz., **M/s. PRAKASH INDUSTRIES,** A Proprietorship Concern, No.B-225, 4th Cross, 1st Stage, Peenya Industrial Area, BANGALORE - 560 058, represented by its Proprietor **Mr. D.K. Prabhudevaiah, S/o Late Kappanna.**

Any person or persons having any claims /objections for the above sale transaction may lodge their claims/objections with documentary evidence within **seven (7) days** from the date of publication of this notice with the undersigned, failing which, thereafter my client shall proceed to complete the sale transaction. Any claims received beyond stipulated period will not be entertained.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Industrial Shed bearing ePID No.4958002969, **Property No.B/225, 4th Cross, 1st Stage, Peenya Industrial Area, Bangalore,** Ward No. 38-HMT, totally measuring **45198 Square Feet** together with industrial factory and bounded on **EAST : Service Road, WEST : Shed bearing No.B-226, NORTH : 4th Cross Road & SOUTH : Shed bearing No.B-234.**

Mr. SADASHIVA M.H. ---ADVOCATE---
KRM ASSOCIATES LAW FIRM,
No.137, 5th Main, 3rd Stage, 2nd Block, Basaveshwaranagara BANGALORE-560 079.
Ph.No.9980816715
Email: sadashivamh@gmail.com

BANGALORE DATED : 16.03.2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mrs. Lekha Chandrashekar, have lost the Original Addendum dated 02/05/2009 executed between myself, Mrs. Priya Harikrishnan alias Priya Chandrashekar, Mrs. Chaya Chandrashekar and M/s. Ashed Properties and Investments Private Limited Property bearing municipal No.1/1, 1/1-1, 1/1-2 (earlier Site No.1 (Old No.3), situated at Sampangi Ramaswami Temple (SRT) Road, (Formerly known as Cunnigham Road), in terms of which certain amendments were carried out in respect of the Joint Development Agreement dated 02/05/2009 and the Owners constructed area along with the Developers constructed area were allocated, to the Owners and Developer respectively. I am the Owner of the Apartment bearing No. A, Municipal No. 1/1, PID No.78-61-1/1, on the Ground Floor in the multistoried building known as "**REGENCY CHANDRA**", constructed and erected on Property bearing municipal No.1/1, 1/1-1, 1/1-2 (earlier Site No.1 (Old No.3), situated at Sampangi Ramaswami Temple (SRT) Road, (Formerly known as Cunnigham Road), Bangalore together with 1308 Sq. Ft. of undivided share in land and having 2902 Sq. Ft. of super built-up area and the total property is bounded on:

East by : Private Property
West by : Road
North by : Road
South by : Private Property

I have offered the said apartment for sale to a prospective buyer and unable to trace the Original Addendum dated 02/05/2009 despite best efforts. Therefore, I have brought out this Public Notice intimating the General Public about loss of the original Addendum dated 02/05/2009. If anyone has the Original Addendum dated 02/05/2009 please contact the undersigned and hand over the same, immediately upon reading this notice. If anyone enters into any transaction on the basis of the said Original Addendum dated 02/05/2009, the same shall not be binding upon me or Mrs. Priya Harikrishnan alias Priya Chandrashekar or Mrs. Chaya Chandrashekar or the prospective buyer and the said persons would be transacting at their own risk and consequences.

Date : 16-03-2026
Place : Bengaluru

Mrs. Lekha Chandrashekar
W/o Late A. D. Chandrashekar
Hirekolale Estate, Hirekolale
Chikmagalur-577 101.
Karnataka

TUNGABHADRA BOARD: TB DAM

e-Procurement Long Term Tender Notice IFB Nos.34/2025-26 to 51/2025-26 Dt.13.03.2026

Tender for **18 Nos. of Works** in respect of HW & HLC Division, TB Dam under 'Works Category" are invited through `e-Procurement'.

Bid Document downloading Start Date & Time:	16.03.2026 at 11:00 AM
Bid Document downloading End Date & Time:	30.03.2026 at 3:00 PM
Bid Submission End Date & Time	30.03.2026 at 5:30 PM
Date of opening of Commercial Stage: **(upto Rs.50.00 Lakhs)**	30.03.2026 at 6:00 PM
Date of opening of PQ Stage: **(above Rs.50.00 Lakhs)**	30.03.2026 at 6:00 PM
Date of opening of Commercial Stage: **(Above Rs.50.00 Lakhs)**	02.04.2026 at 11:00 AM

Further details can be seen @ **https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in**
Ph: 08394 - 259114
Email: seibtbb@yahoo.com

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
I.B, TB Board, TB Dam

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RAYAGADA (R&B) CIRCLE, RAYAGADA

e-mail ID - sepwd_rgda@yahoo.com, Phone/Fax No - 06856 - 223049

e-Procurement Notice / Bid Identification No. C.C.E (R AND B) RGDA- 16/2025-26 (Online) Dt. 10.03.2026

No.341 Date.10.03.2026

34001/192/2526 **INVITATION FOR BIDS**

1.	**The Chief Construction Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Circle, Rayagada** on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover mode to be received in online mode only for the construction of works as detailed in the table below:		
2.	Nature of work	:	Building Works
3.	No of works	:	04 (Four) No. of work
4.	Estimated Cost. (Approximately)	:	Rs.164.85 Lakh, Rs.104.06 Lakhs, Rs.869.98 Lakh and Rs.432.17 Lakhs
5.	Bid Cost (Online)	:	Rs. 10,000/-
6.	EMD/ Bid Security Amount (Online)	:	One Percentage of the Estimated Cost.
7.	Class of Contractor	:	B, A & Special Class only as per Financial Eligibility.
8.	Availability of Bid Documents in the website.	:	11.00 Hours of Dt.20.03.2026 to 17.00 Hours of Dt. 04.04.2026.
9.	Date of opening of Bid	:	11.00 Hrs of. Dt. 06.04.2026.
10.	The Bidders have to participate in **ONLINE** bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tendersorissa.gov.in.** Any Addendum /Corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.		

OIPR-34001/34154/1/25-26/0023 **Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Circle, Rayagada**

LIC HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
1st Floor, Jeevan Managal Building, Hayes Road, Bengaluru -560025. Ph.: 080-43003651

POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Office of the M/S, LIC Housing Finance Limited the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Asset and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of security Interest(enforcement) Rule 2002 issued demand notice on below mentioned date calling upon the borrower/guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act with rule 9 of the said rules on below mentioned date.

The Borrower and the public in general are here by cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with property will be subject to the charge of M/s. LIC Housing Finance Limited for an amount notice mentioned below and interest thereon,

The Borrower attention is invited to provisions of section 13(8) of the said ACT, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Name of the Borrower, Loan No & Possession Taken Date	Demand Notice Date	Notice Amount	Description of the Property
MR. MUNIRAJU C MS. SARITHA NARAYANAPPA V Loan A/c No. 411800004848 411800005768 411800006619 Symbolic Possession Date : 12/03/2026	21/11/2025	Rs. 3974291.00	**SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of the House Site bearing No.169, Village Panchayat Katha No.831, and E-katha No.150200102201621584, totally measuring 1200 Sq.Ft. in the layout known as "ADITHYA HOMES", Situated at Chikkanahalli – Kamanahalli Village, Sarjapur Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, formed in the Sy. No.73/3 from Agricultural purpose to Non-agricultural Residential purpose vide Official Memorandum No.ALN (SA) SR156/2010-2011, dated 04.11.2010, Layout was approved by Anekal Planning Authority Vide No.APA/LAO/56/2010-11, DATED 28.02.2011, MEASURING East to West: 40 feet and North to South: 30 feet, totally measuring 1200 Sq. Feet and bounded on the: East by: Site No.180, West by: Road, North by: Site No.168, South by: Site No.170.**
MR. KRISHNAPPA NISCHAL Loan A/c No. 411600005479 Symbolic Possession Date :12/03/2026	28/09/2022	Rs. 3546451.00	**SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTY : ITEM NO.1: All the piece and parcel of land bearing Sy.No.284, measuring 0-10 (Ten) Guntas, situated at Hulimangala Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban district and bounded on the: East by: Property of N. Ramaiah, West by: Property of Eeragallappa North by:- Property of Guru Reddy and Venkatesh Reddy bearing Sy. No.284, South by: Property of Smt. Neelamma and N. Muni Reddy ITEM NO.2: All that piece and parcel of land bearing Sy.No.284, measuring 0-12(Twelve) Guntas, situated at Hulimangala Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, bounded on: East by : Ramaiah&Lakshmaiah Reddy &Pilla Reddy's Land West by: Property of Eeragallappa North by: Property of Suresh, South by: Private property. SCHEDULE ' B ' PROPERTY : 375 sft of undivided share, right, title and interest in the land covered under the Schedule A property. SCHEDULE 'C' PROPERTY : A Two Bed rooms apartment bearing Flat No. M-101, Property No.284, on the First Floor of the Building known as MANASA MANSION constructed on the Schedule A Property having super built up area of 1120 sq.ft which is inclusive of the Floors, ceiling and walls, between the apartments and proportionate share in common area, together with one car parking space in the basement. The apartment is bounded as follows: East by: Private road, West by: Residential Layout(Private), North by: Site belongs to Babu& Manu Reddy, South by: Flat No. M 102.**
MS.KRITHIKA MR.T BABU Loan A/c No. 411600006462 Symbolic Possession Date : 12/03/2026	03/01/2025	Rs. 5024978.00	**SCHEDULE - A : All that piece and parcel of the property bearing No.3B, having BBMP Khata No.67/26/10/3, in converted Sy No.26/10 measuring 2-02.08(Two AcreTwo and Half Guntas) from Agriculture to Non-Agricultural residential purpose vide Official Memorandum No.ALN(SB)(B.H) SR:27/12-13, dated 12-10-2012 issued by Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore Urban District, situated at Yellukunte Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, presently under the administrative jurisdiction of Bangalore Mahanagar Palike, measuring East to West 85'-0" (Eighty Five Feet), North to South Eastern Side:31'-0"(Thirty One Feet), Western Side: 41'-0"(Forty One Feet), totally 3050 Sq. feet and bounded on the: East by: Remaining Portion of Sy No.26/10 belongs to Ramanna West by: 30 feet wide Road North by: Property No.3A, South by: Land in Sy No.26/8. SCHEDULE - B : 298 Sq. feet undivided right, title and interest in the immovable property mentioned in Schedule "A" above. SCHEDULE C : Flat bearing No.401, in the fourth Floor, measuring about 1423 Sq.ft. Super built up area, containing Three Bed rooms, together with RCC Roofing, Vitrified flooring along with one covered car parking space, including proportionate share in common areas such as passages, lobbies, staircase, etc., in the multi storied residential building known as "AKSHAYA HOMES" constructed over Schedule "A" property said flat in bounded on: East by: Remaining Portion of Sy No.26/10 belongs to Ramanna, West by: Flat No.402, North by: Property No.3A, South by: Land in Sy No.26/8.**

Place: Bangalore
Date: 16.03.2026

Sd/- Authorized Officer
LIC Housing Finance Limited

Karnataka's efforts to address destitution and street begging through institutional rehabilitation have seen thousands of vulnerable individuals brought into state-run relief centres over the last four years. Official data shows that 13,908 destitute persons and beggars have been arrested, detained and rehabilitated in 15 relief centres across the state

NH toll rates policy needs review: Panel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka State Travel Operators' Association has urged the Centre to review the toll pricing framework on national highways, arguing that the existing rules framed under the National Highways Fee (Devtermination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008, no longer reflect current realities. K Radhakrishna Holla, representing the association, said toll charges are being revised every year strictly based on rules formulated in 2008, without adequately considering major changes that have taken place in the country's road and transport sector over the past 15 to 18 years.

He pointed out that highway infrastructure, vehicle numbers and traffic patterns have undergone substantial changes since the rules were introduced. According to him, in several highway projects, the initial investment in road construction is widely believed to have already been recovered, often more than twice, through toll collection.

At the same time, the number of vehicles using national highways has increased rapidly each year, leading to higher toll revenue. Considering these factors, the government should constitute a committee to review the National Highways Toll Rules of 2008. The review should be based on a comparison between the vehicle population before 2008 and the latest registered vehicle numbers up to March 2026, Holla added. "A comprehensive reassessment of toll pricing on national highways is urgently required in the interest of fairness and transparency for road users," he said.

31 KPS magnets opened since 2022: Madhu

No schools closed, says minister; experts critise government's decision to shut over 25,000 institutions

RASHMI PATIL @ Bengaluru

EVEN as various educationists and child rights organisations are criticising the decision of the state government and department of school education to close more than 25,000 schools and start 800 Karnataka Public Schools (KPS) as magnet schools from 2022 to 2025, Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa said the department has opened 31 new KPS schools from 2022 to 2025 across the state by merging various primary, high schools and PU colleges.

The minister revealed this data while replying to BJP MLC Hanumanth Nirani and Congress MLC Bilkis Banu, during the ongoing legislative session.

He said no schools are being closed to start new KPS magnet schools. However, the reality on the ground is different. Two of seven government schools in Channapatna taluk were closed and students were shifted to Honganur KPS. The department of school education and literacy issued showcause notice to teachers and principals of the remaining five government schools in Channapatna taluk for failing to convince parents and children to enrol in Honganur KPS magnet school.

The minister said, "Various primary, high schools and PU colleges were merged to start these 31 new KPS schools. The department has started only 35

Urdu medium KPS schools from 2018 to 2025. In 2025-26, around 100 Urdu medium schools and Moulana Azad schools have been upgraded as KPS schools. This makes a total of 131 schools."

He explained, "No children are forced to enrol in KPS schools. In fact, we see that parents are not financially burdened and education is provided from LKG to PUC 2 in bilingual medium. We also provide skill training courses along with computer courses. The government is also aware that the rate of enrolment has reduced by 11.20 per cent in the past three years. But it is not because of starting or upgrading KPS schools. Parents are attracted to English medium schools and CBSE schools and want to enrol their children, which is why the enrolment percentage has reduced. This is why the government has started bilingual mediums in 9,522 primary schools as well as 6,456 lower primary schools."

Developmental educationist Dr VP Niranjanaradhya criticised the decision to shut down neighbourhood schools in villages. He said, "What is the real concept of KPS and magnet schools? No one knows what the concept policy is, as no documents containing details of the policy have been provided in public domain. On one hand, the minister is saying in the House that not a single school will be closed.

However, the work of quietly closing down schools in villages by merging them with magnet schools is being done by the officials. The government has failed to consider important factors like the distance of government schools for merger, and whether it violates the concept of the neighbourhood school as defined in the Right to Education."

CM urges Centre to address LPG shortage in K'taka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said the state government has written to the Centre urging it to explore alternative measures, including importing gas from abroad, to address the shortage of LPG cylinders. Siddaramaiah was speaking to reporters in Bengaluru.

He said the government has already responded to the issue in the Legislature when asked about disruptions in LPG supply. He also said a large section of the population depends on hotels for food and any disruption in hotel services due to LPG shortage would affect normal life.

"Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has assured that steps will be taken to ensure there is no disruption in LPG supply," he said and alleged that Central is meting out step motherly treatment to Karnataka. On criticism from BJP leaders that the LPG supply issue is limited to Karnataka, Siddaramaiah said that instead of making statements, they should urge Centre to ensure increased LPG supply to the state.

A cook at a hotel in Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath prepares food with firewood on Sunday after LPG cylinder supply petered out across the city on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Crackdown on LPG hoarding, five FIRs filed across K'taka

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ACCORDING to official data, a total of 11,41,657 domestic LPG cylinders and 20,941 commercial and auto LPG cylinders were distributed in the state between March 12 and 14, 2026.

The department also intensified enforcement against illegal storage, transport and refilling of LPG cylinders. Officials said raids were conducted in several districts where domestic cylinders were allegedly being diverted for commercial use or stored illegally. A total of five FIRs have been registered so far, including cases at APMC police station in Davanagere and police stations in Peenya, Chikkajala and Kengeri in Bengaluru, as well as Andersonpet police station in Kolar.

A total of 514 cylinders were seized from several districts, including Shivamogga, Yadgir, Davanagere, Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Kolar, Raichur and Chikkamagaluru for violations such as illegal storage, refilling and diversion of domestic cylinders for commercial purposes. The department said strict action will continue against violators while ensuring adequate supply for households and essential public services across the state.

Dakshina Kannada farmers turn to biogas amid LPG crisis

DIVYA CUTINHO @ Mangaluru

THE recent LPG cylinder shortage in India created significant challenges for many households that depend on cooking gas for their daily needs. In response to this crisis, several farmers in Dakshina Kannada have turned to biogas as a reliable and sustainable alternative.

One such example is Glen Roche, a dairy farmer who runs a homestay and a farmhouse at Inoli in Ullal taluk. Unlike many others affected by the LPG shortage, Roche continues his daily activities without disruption. Thanks to the biogas plants that he and many other dairy farmers have set up, they are able to produce their own fuel and effectively beat the LPG crisis in Dakshina Kannada.

Building on this, he explained, "We have 15 cows, and the cow dung manure is used for biogas plants. We shifted from LPG to biogas as it is a sustainable. Even our workers who stay here use the biogas plant for all their cooking needs. For electricity, I have been using solar energy, and for our farm, we use organic natural manure." The biogas plant has also helped Jagannath Poojary from Murulya in Puttur taluk alleviate the impact of the LPG shortage in the market. Earlier, he had over 50 cows and supplied up to 150 litres of milk to the dairy. Although the number of cattle has decreased, he has continued dairy farming, and the Gobar gas unit set up about 20 years ago is still operational.

Experts say that biogas is a sustainable solution that turns waste into energy | EXPRESS

"I use cow dung manure for producing the biogas daily, and it has reduced reliance on LPG cylinders completely, and it provides a clean, smoke-free, and sustainable alternative to LPG and firewood," he said. Jeeth Milan Roche, a Mangaluru-based environmentalist, said that biogas is a simple, sustainable solution that turns waste into energy while protecting the environment. "Biogas saves our forests as it reduces the need for firewood. It is also a renewable energy source which is locally available," he said.

Man arrested for illegally storing gas cylinders

BENGALURU: A 30-year-old man has been arrested by the Kengeri police following a complaint by a food inspector for illegally storing gas cylinders of various companies and creating an artificial shortage to sell them at higher prices.

Mangal Ram, owner of Mahalakshmi Enterprises in Mylasandra, was arrested on Saturday.

40-year-old Mahantagouda Tadlagi, the food inspector of Bengaluru South Taluk, filed the complaint against Ram on Saturday. The officer said that that the owner had illegally stored 15 gas cylinders. A case has been registered against the accused. ENS

LAST ELECTION IN 1989

Experts divided over student polls in K'taka

RASHMI PATIL @Bengaluru

AMIDST the debate among academicians and students about whether student elections should be held in universities or colleges, the Karnataka Government on March 6 announced conducting student elections from the next academic year in universities and colleges.

While some academicians have come in support of elections, others fear that it will bring back rowdy culture and caste politics into campuses. Therefore, they suggest there must be a systematic strategy to implement student elections, and political parties must not only remain off campuses but also stay away from imposing their ideas on students.

The last student elections in state universities happened in 1989, after which they were stalled due to a few violent incidents.

Muralidhar BL, professor of the Computer Science department from Bangalore University, Jnanabharti Campus, explained, "Student elections must happen because elected student representatives can explain the problems to the administration. These days, the vice chancellors select a student representative on their own who is likely to favour all the decisions by the administration. There will always be fights among student groups with or without elections on the campuses. In fact, the administration must come out with a clear road map to prevent these fights from happening."

He added, "Caste system or politics will continue to exist even in the student elections. It cannot disappear when the universities have segregated even the hostels based on the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST). If they are to blame the elections for the same, then they must get rid of caste-based hostels in the first place."

Meanwhile, prof Basavaraj Donur from Central University of Karnataka in Kalaburagi, said, "Although there is a provision in the University Grants Commission (UGC) to conduct student elections, it should not happen because it will only destroy the academic atmosphere of the campuses. Many students are coming from across the globe to study in Karnataka. If elections happen, then it will give rise to fights and controversies on the campus."

On the other hand, student organisations want the elections to happen; however, it should not be just to create cadres for national political parties like Congress and BJP, but to address student issues.

Apurva CM, state vice president, All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO), said, "Congress is keen on implementing student elections to get new cadres for NSUI and future leaders. This should become clearly a democratic body to discuss issues related to education policies and rectifying flaws, ragging, issues related to their respective universities related to infrastructure and professors recruitment, allocation of guides for PhD scholars and more."

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited
(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal only)
No: CEE/ BGKT/Tr.(Op)Z/SEE (O)/AEE-8/25-26/21101-09 Date: 11.03.2026

KPTCL invites tender on Electronic mode for the following works Including supply of matching materials, erection, civil works, testing and commissioning.

1. Bid Enquiry No: **KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN-05/25-26/KERUR,** Tender No: **KPTCL/2025-26/SS/ WORK_INDENT3343** for Replacement of age old 11KV Power Gear Make MCVCB Breakers by 2 I/C+8F+1BC+1AP MEI Make MCVCB Breakers at **110KV sub-station Kerur** in Bagalkote District on **Partial TurnKey Basis.** Reserved for **OTHERS** category.

2. Bid Enquiry No: **KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN-06/25-26/SINDAGI** Tender No: **KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT3344** for Erection, Testing and commissioning of new MEI Make 11KV (4F+1ADP+1AP) MCVCBs on existing available platform for new 11KV Link lines at **110KV sub-station SINDAGI** in Operations Division, KPTCL, Vijayapura on **Partial Turnkey Basis.** Reserved for **OTHERS** category.

3. Bid Enquiry No: **KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN-07/25-26/KIADBVIJAYAPUR**, Tender No: **KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT3345** for Erection, Testing and commissioning of new MEI make 11kV (4F+1AP) MCVCBs on existing available platform for new 11kV link lines at **110KV sub-station KIADB Vijayapura** on **Partial Turnkey Basis.** Reserved for **SC** category.

4. Bid Enquiry No: **KPTCL/ CEE/ TRNS/ BGKT/ 110KV/STN-08/ 25-26/TAKKALAKI**, Tender No: **KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_ INDENT3346** for Erection, Testing and commissioning of new MEI make 11kV (3F+1AP) PCVCBs for new 11kV link lines at **110KV sub-station Takkalaki** on **Partial Turnkey Basis**. Reserved for **OTHERS** category.

5. Bid Enquiry No: **KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN-04/25-26/MUDALAGI**, Tender No: **KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT3342**, for Providing 2 no's of Additional 11KV MCVCB Switchgears and 2 no's 12.1kV, 2.9 MVAr Star connected Capacitor Banks at **110/11kV sub-station Mudalagi** in TL&SS Division, KPTCL, Belagavi on **Partial Turnkey Basis.** Reserved for **OTHERS** category.

6. Bid Enquiry No: **KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN-01/25-26/VADAGAVI,** Tender No: **KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT3339** for Replacement of existing 3 no's of age old 110KV SF6 CGL make air compressor type Circuit breakers by New for 110KV Belagavi I/C, 10 MVA 110/11 kV Power Transformer No-1 HV CB & 20 MVA 110/11 kV Power Transformer No-2 HV CB at **110/33/11kV MUSS Vadagavi,** coming under Operaton Division KPTCL Belagavi in Belagavi District on **Total Turnkey Basis.** Reserved for **OTHERS** category.

7. Bid Enquiry No: **KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN-02/25-26/RAMDURG,** Tender No: **KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT3340** for Providing additional 4 no's of 11KV MCVCB switchgears along with 2 no's of 11KV Banks and 1 No of Annunciator panel to the existing 20MVA, 110/11KV power transformer at **110KV sub-station Ramdurg** in Operation Division, KPTCL, Belagavi on **Partial Turnkey Basis.** Reserved for **SC** category.

8. Bid Enquiry No: **KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN-03/25-26/MACHE**, Tender No: **KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_ INDENT3341** for Replacement of 2 no's of age old 110KV Circuit breakers by new 110KV SF6 Circuit Breakers at **110KV Mache** sub-station Belagavi District on **Total Turnkey Basis**. Reserved for **CATEGORY-I** category.

The tenders will be received through E-procurement portal only. The details regarding participation in the E-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website: **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyper link **'E Procurement KPTCL'** OR **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **16:30 Hrs. IST of 17.03.2026.** Any other details can be had from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Elec.),
Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL,
110KV sub-station premises, Navanagara, Bagalkot - 587 103.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client, **Kamla Sharma Family Trust** intends to purchase the Apartment bearing No. A, from its Owner Mrs. Lekha Chandrashekar, wife of Late A. D. Chandrashekar, residing at Hirekolale Estate, Hirekolale, Chikmagalur-577101, Karnataka. The Apartment is constructed on the property bearing Municipal No. 1/1, PID No.78-61-1/1, on the Ground Floor in the multistoried building known as "**REGENCY CHANDRA**", constructed and erected on Property bearing municipal No.1/1, 1/1-1, 1/1-2 (earlier Site No.1 (Old No.3), situated at Sampangi Ramaswami Temple (SRT) Road, (Formerly known as Cunnigham Road), Bangalore together with 1308 Sq. Ft. of undivided share in land and having 2902 Sq. Ft. of super built-up area and the total property is bounded on:

East by : Private Property;
West by : Road;
North by : Road; and
South by : Private Property.

If anyone has any interest or objections to the proposed sale, please contact the undersigned with relevant and supporting documents, within seven (7) days from the date of this public notice, failing which it will be deemed that no one has any claim on the Schedule Property. Our client will then proceed to purchase the same and any claim beyond the said period of seven (7) days, will not be entertained. Upon purchase, our client will be deemed to have acquired absolute right, title and interest in respect of the Schedule Property.

Date : 16-03-2026
Place : Bengaluru

Veena. R., Advocate
No. 1259/2, Ground Floor, 24th Cross
Magadi Road Housing Board Colony
Basaveshwara Nagar
Bengaluru-560 079.
Mob: 98861 08404

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that our **"Construction of Residential Buildings"** Project at Sy Nos. 52/2, 74/6, 74/7, 74/8, 74/11, 148/1, 148/2, 149/2 & 149/3, Yadavanahalli Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, Karnataka by **'Urban Space Projects'** has been accorded with Environmental Clearance (E.C.) Letter No. **SEIAA 249, CON 2025,** dated 31.01.2026, received from SEIAA.

Copy of the Environmental Clearance is available with the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board and may also be seen on the website of the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority, Karnataka at website : https://environmentclearance.nic.in//.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that our client has negotiated with **Mrs. SUDHA RANI,** W/o Mr. Eswaraiah, aged about 51 years, residing at No. 8 Venkata Sidu, 6th Main, T.C.Palya Main Road, Near Petrol Bunk, Hoysalnagar, Doorvaninagar, Bengaluru-560016 to purchase the Schedule Property for valuable consideration. It is represented to our client that **Mrs. SUDHA RANI,** W/o Mr. Eswaraiah, is the absolute owner of the Schedule Property and she has acquired the Schedule Property under the Sale Deed dated 21st January 2011, registered as Document No.BNS-1-06864-2010-11, stored in CD No. BNSD77, with the office of the Sub-Registrar, Banasavadi(Shivajinagar) Bengaluru, executed by Mr. H Krishna Singh. Any person(s) claiming any right, title or interest of whatsoever nature over the Schedule Property is called upon to lodge such claim with the undersigned, with supporting documents within 7 days from the date of this publication. In the event no such claim(s) is received within the stipulated time, it shall be lawful for our client to presume that there are no valid claim(s) adverse to **Mrs. SUDHA RANI**'s right, title and interest in the Schedule Property and proceeds with the proposed sale transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the residential immovable property bearing Site No.8, Property No. 418/8/161, BBMP E-PID No.2513170174, House List No.221/8, BBMP Old Khata Sl.No.418, Old Khata No.161, measuring East to West 40 feet and North to South 30 feet, admeasuring 1200 Sq. feet (111.48 Sq. Meters), together with Residential House comprising of Ground, and Duplex Floors, measuring 3000 Sq. Feet, the walls are built out of Brick and Cement with Granite Flooring with wooden Doors and Windows and RCC roofing, It has BESCOM (Electricity), and BWSSB (Water and Sanitary)Connection, situated at BBMP Ward No.25, Horamavu Village, K.R Puram Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk Bengaluru, and bounded on: East by: Water Channel, West by : 25 Feet Road, North by : Property No.7, and South by : Property No.9.

M/s. B.M. Associates,
Advocates & Consultants,
No. 7/1, Top Floor, G.J. Complex, 100 feet Road, Indiranagar I stage, Bangalore-560038.

QuoteExpress

WITHOUT HARD WORK, NOTHING GROWS BUT WEEDS

GORDON B HINCKLEY

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that, we are investigating the title of immovable property being the agricultural land bearing Sy.No.100, Sy.No.103/2 and Sy.No.103/3 from its owners all are situated at Tipaturu Village, Kodihalli Hobli, Kanakapura Taluk, Ramanagara District, which are currently owned by the respective land owners as detailed below. The land parcels for which we are investigating the title are described in the schedule below and shall hereinafter be referred to as the **"SCHEDULE PROPERTY."**

If any person, or the general public, banks, financial institutions, Co-operative banks/societies, or any institutions and entities or anyone having any manner of right, title, interest, claim, or demand in relation to the Schedule Property or any part thereof, or has executed any transactions or documents (whether registered or unregistered) with the owners or their predecessors in title, having the effect of creating an encumbrance thereon, they are hereby called upon to submit their statements, objections, or claims in writing, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the undersigned within Fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this notice.

If no such objections are received within the said period, it shall be conclusively presumed that no person has any right, title, interest, claim, demand, charge, or encumbrance whatsoever over the Schedule Property or any part thereof, and we shall proceed to issue our opinion confirming that the owners have clear and marketable title to the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Extent A-G	PRESENT OWNERS	BOUNDARIES
01.	100	4-35 & 10 Guntas of Kharab	Smt. B.J. Rekha W/o Late M.M. Mahesh and Smt. Nethravathi. B.J. W/o Sri. Amaresh P.	**East by** Land bearing Sy.No.37 and Sy.No. 99; **West by** Land belonging to Sri.Chidananada Swamy; **North by** Land bearing Sy.No.78; **South by** Government Halla.
02.	103/2	3-08 & 8 Guntas of Kharab	Smt. B.C. Vinutha W/o Sri. K.M. Mahesh Babu and Sri. Santhosh B.C. S/o Sri. Chidananda Swamy	**East by** Land belonging to Sri.B.C.Jayakumar; **West by** Land belonging to Smt.Bhavya; **North by** Land bearing Sy.No.35; **South by** Government Halla.
03.	103/3	3-08 & 32 Guntas of Kharab	Smt. Bhavya D/o Late B.C. Somashekar.	**East by** Land belonging to Sri.Chidananda Swamy; **West by** Government Halla. **North by** Land belonging to Sri.Eshwarachari; **South by** Government Halla.

Dated: 14/03/2026
Place: Bengaluru

Sd/- **VIJAYA H.R.,** Advocate
VSR LEGAL, Advocates & Legal Consultants,
No.01, **"SOWRABHA",** 2nd Main Road, Kalyana Nagar,
Bangalore- 560072. Ph: 9845954657/9900068017

The DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance held a statewide protest on Sunday condemning the Union government for shortage of LPG cylinders across the state. In a post on X, Chief Minister M K Stalin demanded the Centre to resolve the matter as soon as possible

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

AIADMK forms a 5-member panel to negotiate with allies; DMK slightly ahead in talks

SEAT SHARE TALKS DRAG ON IN TN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

THOUGH the Assembly election in Tamil Nadu is just 38 days away, political blocs in the state, including the ruling DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance and the AIADMK-led National Democratic Alliance, are yet to finalise their seat-sharing arrangements.

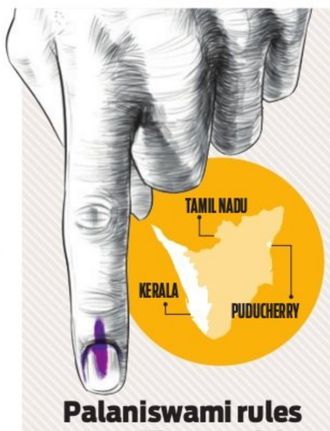
While the DMK seems to be finding it difficult to accommodate the seat demands of several of its allies, the AIADMK may be delaying the process tactically to give itself the latitude to accommodate parties that may cross over to its side due o possible fallout over sharing of seats in the opposition camps.

Having finalised seat-sharing with Congress, MDMK, IUML, KDMK and MMK, the DMK is slightly ahead of the curve. The ruling party, which began its seat-sharing discussions on February 22, has allocated 28 seats to the Congress, four seats to the MDMK, and two seats each to IUML, MMK and KDMK. However, long-time allies CPI, CPM and VCK, and new allies Premalatha Vijayakant's DMDK and Kamal Haasan's MNM, have not been allotted their share of seats yet.

On the other hand, the AIADMK, just a couple of hours before the announcement of the election schedule, constituted a seat-sharing committee comprising four senior leaders — KP Munusamy, Dindigul C Sreenivasan, SP Velumani and B Valarmathi — to hold talks with alliance partners.

A senior AIADMK leader told TNIE that a broad agreement on seat-sharing had already been reached among the NDA allies. When asked about the status of seat-sharing, Palaniswami said there is ample time for talks, as nominations start only on March 30. He expressed confidence that the seat-sharing process within the AIADMK-led alliance will be smooth. The newly-launched Vijay's TVK held a meeting of its district secretaries on Friday and sought their opinion on the possibility of entering into an alliance without naming any party.

The NTK, which is set to contest alone, had announced its full list of candidates for all 234 constituencies in February.



Palaniswami rules out alliance with Vijay-led TVK

CHENNAI: AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Sunday said neither his party nor allies have held talks with the actor-politician Vijay-led fledgling TVK for the April 23 Assembly polls. Speaking to reporters at an Iftar event held by the party here, Palaniswami, flanked by Tamil Nadu BJP chief Nainar Nagenthran and AMMK chief TTV Dhinakaran, when asked if he wished TVK to be part of the AIADMK-led NDA, said: "I have said this before. So far, AIADMK and leaders of its alliance parties have not held talks with the party that you have mentioned (in order to form an alliance for the Assembly polls)." Palaniswami's comment on Sunday is the third such assertion and he had on March 14 and 11 ruled out scope for alliance with TVK and had dismissed scope for alliance as mere media speculation.

Political parties scramble as nomination process for Pondy poll begins today

PUDUCHERRY: With the Election Commission of India (ECI) announcing the poll schedule, political parties in Puducherry are finding themselves racing against time to finalise seat sharing, constituencies and candidates as the nomination process begins on Monday. The Congress and the DMK, partners in the INDIA bloc, are yet to decide on key aspects of their electoral arrangement, including the number of seats each party will contest, the constituencies to be allotted, and most importantly, which party will lead the alliance in the union territory. Although representatives of the two parties held their first round of discussions recently, the meeting failed to reach a consensus on seat sharing and the leader of the alliance. Leaders eventually decided to leave the matter to their respective party high commands. Apart from seat-sharing, the identification of constituencies remains another major hurdle, which the parties must overcome before finalising candidates for the seats allotted under the alliance arrangement.

LDF gets early advantage; UDF, NDA face engine troubles

ANIL S @ T'Puram

CAUGHT by surprise by the unprecedentedly short window for elections, all three political fronts in the state have switched into electoral mode overnight. With just 24 days left for the crucial assembly elections, the ruling LDF hit the campaign trail running, while the UDF and the NDA are geared to make up for lost time.

The biggest challenge now before the UDF and NDA is to finish seat sharing and candidate finalisation within the short span of time before starting the campaign, as any further delay in declaring candidates and starting campaigning could affect winnability.

With only a week remaining for the dealine to file nominations, LDF has more or less finished seat sharing, except for Antony Raju's Democratic Kerala Congress. Both CPM and CPI announced candidates immediately after poll declaration. Keen to cash in on the early bird advantage, a fired-up LDF even launched campaigning. Though LDF faces internal bickerings and open revolt, it has been able to present a more or less united face. Riding on the development and welfare initiatives of the government, the LDF has chosen to rely mostly on sitting ministers and legislators. Including independents, 56 sitting MLAs figure in the CPM list, while there are seven sitting MLAs among CPI candidates.

The UDF is set to finalise seat-sharing. The BJP-led NDA which hopes to make a mark this time around, is facing issues over seat sharing and candidate selection, too.

Actor Vijay comes out of CBI HQ after interrogation; Vijay's fans celebrate outside CBI HQ on Sunday | SAYANTAN GHOSH

Karur stampede: CBI grills TVK's Vijay for seven hours

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) grilled actor and TVK chief Vijay for over seven hours at headquarters in Delhi on Sunday over last year's stampede during his rally in Tamil Nadu's Karur that claimed 41 lives. He repeated the same what he had said earlier that it was state police to maintain law and order and he had been cooperated with the authorities in all ways, sources in CBI said.

The actor left the agency headquarters after the questioning and related formalities got over around 6 pm. This was the third round of questioning for Vijay. He has been examined twice in January. Vijay was earlier summoned on March 9. However, he had requested that the date be deferred by 15 days.

The central probe agency has also asked the DMK MLA from Karur, Senthil Balaji, to appear for questioning on March 17, they said.The actor was earlier questioned by the agency at its headquarters on January 12 and 19.During the probe, the CBI has gathered material that needs further questioning and clarifications from the actor, the officials added.

The actor had previously told the investigators that neither his party nor its functionaries were responsible for the deadly Karur stampede on September 27, 2025, which claimed 41 lives and left more than 60 people injured. He also told investigators that inadequate police deployment during his Karur rally led to the chaos that resulted in the stampede.

He also submitted documents, including the rally application, and was questioned on whether police guidelines were followed. The CBI took over the case from an SIT following a Supreme Court order on a petition filed by TVK seeking an independent inquiry. The central agency has already questioned several TVK office bearers and has also summoned former Tamil Nadu ADG (law and order) S Davidson Devasirvatham as part of the investigation.

The Supreme Court had also constituted a three-member supervisory committee headed by former judge Ajay Rastogi to monitor the probe, stressing the need for an impartial and unbiased investigation.

UDF won't be people's alternative against Pinarayi govt: BJP

T'PURAM : Speaking after the election declaration, BJP national executive member P K Krishnadas responded that the assembly election will see the downfall of the two traditional fronts which led Kerala to "this pathetic condition". "People will vote against the Pinarayi Vijayan government, but they will not see Congress as the alternative. We hope people will align with Narendra Modi in the coming days," the party's probable Kattakada candidate said. Meanwhile, the party's national general secretary and poll in-charge of the state, Vinod Tawde, has reached the state capital on Sunday, and the candidate list is expected to be out by Tuesday.

People will end LDF misrule, says Kerala LoP Satheesan

KOCHI: Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan on Sunday said the people of Kerala were eagerly awaiting the assembly elections to bring an end to what he described as the "misrule" of the LDF government. Speaking to reporters in North Paravur after the announcement of the poll schedule, Satheesan said the United Democratic Front (UDF) was united and approaching the election with confidence. He said the front would announce its list of candidates within 24 hours. "The era of seat distribution based on factional interests within parties has ended. Candidates have been selected after consultations among leaders, taking into account their chances of victory," Satheesan said.

TDP MP, ex-BRS MLA test positive for drugs

ENS @ Hyderabad

TDP MP from Andhra Pradesh **Putta Mahesh Kumar**, and former BRS MLA **Pilot Rohith Reddy,** were among six people detained here after testing positive for alleged drug consumption, officials said on Sunday.

On reliable information that a drug party was going on at a farmhouse in Moinabad near here, owned by Rohith Reddy, the Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement (EAGLE) Force in coordination with local police teams raided it on Saturday night. One of those who was detained had allegedly opened fire three rounds with a revolver in the air after noticing the police team.

Eleven individuals, who attended the party were tested on the spot using Urine Drug Testing Kits, and five among them including Rohith Reddy tested positive for drug consumption while Mahesh Kumar, the Eluru MP from Andhra Pradesh, tested negative initially.

As part of further procedures, they were taken to a hospital and upon re-testing, the results confirmed that six people, including the MP tested positive for drugs, a senior official of EAGLE Force said.

TDP has given 48 hours to Putta Mahesh Kumar, Member of Parliament from Eluru, to submit a written explanation over allegations linking him to drug use in connection with the Moinabad farmhouse drug case.

Pilot Rohith Reddy, Putta Mahesh Kumar

SUNSET SMILES

Women and children take pictures at Kozhikode Beach, as the day's fast ends for iftar | VINCENT PULICKAL

EXPRESS READ

We'll always support minorities, says Revanth

HYDERABAD: Alleging that some forces were trying to create rift between communities, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy called upon the people to live together in harmony and help Telangana become the number one state in the country. Speaking at the 'Dawat-E-Iftar' organised by the Minority Welfare department here, he said that his government would always support minorities.

IMD forecasts 5 days of thunderstorms in AP

AMARAVATI: The IMD on Sunday forecast thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds across parts of Andhra Pradesh for the next five days. Thunderstorm activity accompanied by lightning is expected at isolated places, with wind speeds ranging up to 50 km per hour. On March 16, thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely at isolated places over Coastal Andhra.

ODISHA RS POLL: 2 BJD CANDIDATES STAY AWAY

BANSY KALAPPA
@ Bengaluru, Bhubaneshwar

On the eve of a high-stakes Rajya Sabha election in Odisha, an unexpected disciplinary move in the BJD has thrown fresh light on intense political manoeuvring under way, and on how close the Odisha opposition Congress believes it may have come to losing crucial votes.

The drama began when BJD Chief Whip Pramila Mallik issued showcause notices to Baliguda MLA Chakramani Kanhar and Jayadev MLA Naba Kishore Mallick for staying away from three key party briefings ahead of Monday's vote. Both legislators were ordered to appear at the BJD headquarters, Naveen Niwas, the residence of BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik, by 9pm Sunday and explain their absence. At first glance, the move appeared to be routine party discipline. But in the arithmetic of the Rajya Sabha contest, the absence of even two MLAs could have dramatically shifted the balance.

In Karnataka, where several Odisha Congress legislators have been corralled in a Bengaluru resort as a precaution, Congress leaders admitted to being disturbed. "It could easily have been us," one Congress functionary remarked, referring to fears that opposition MLAs could be lured away before the vote. The fourth Rajya Sabha seat in the 147-member Odisha assembly is delicately poised. The BJP is expected to secure two seats comfortably, while BJD is set to win one. The final seat has become a prestige issue between Opposition-backed candidate Datteswar Hota and BJP-supported independent Dilip Ray. The opposition combination -- BJD, Congress and Communist Party of India (Marxist) -- appears to have the numbers on paper. Yet, the margin is slender enough for a defection or abstention by even a couple of MLAs to tilt the result. That fragility has triggered what political observers describe as "resort politics".

Congress legislators were moved to Karnataka under the watch of Deputy CM DK Shivakumar amid apprehensions of inducements and pressure tactics. Congress leaders have accused BJP of engineering defections, which critics say has been enabled by loopholes and slow legal processes. Over the past decade, several Congress governments have fallen after waves of defections that opposition parties allege were politically orchestrated. Against that backdrop, the sudden disappearance of two BJD MLAs from internal meetings set off alarm bells across Opposition circles.

The show-cause notices were interpreted as a signal that the BJD leadership would tolerate no ambiguity in loyalty as voting approaches. For the Opposition alliance, the episode has underscored how fragile the numbers are. Had even two votes slipped away, the carefully stitched arithmetic could have collapsed, handing the BJP-backed camp a surprise advantage. Ahead of Monday's vote, the focus has shifted to whether the two legislators will appear before the party leadership and reaffirm their allegiance, or Odisha's numbers game still holds the possibility of a last-minute twist. One Congress supporter said, "The last time DKS shielded Congress MLAs during the election of Ahmed Patel, the IT and ED even sent him to jail. Wonder who Congress leaders will support this time."

192 STRANDED IN BAHRAIN LAND IN KOCHI

MANISHA V C S @ Kochi

FAMILIES gathered anxiously at the international arrival lobby of the Cochin International Airport on Sunday evening as several flights from the Middle East were scheduled to land from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Among them was a special chartered flight carrying 192 passengers who had travelled from Dammam in Saudi Arabia after being stranded in the conflict-hit Bahrain.

Bahrain's airspace had been closed on February 28 following missile attacks, leaving thousands of expatriates, including many Malayalees, stranded in the small Gulf nation.

At the airport lobby, Sunesh Sesco, a native of Kannur and a businessman based in Bahrain, had arrived two hours early to receive the passengers.

"The flight is full of elderly and ailing people, parents with young children, people whose visas expired, and others facing emergencies back home. Apart from waiting to see my own family, from whom I have been separated for two weeks because of the war, I am also here to receive all the 192 passengers on behalf of the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam," he said.

For many passengers, the journey home came after days of uncertainty.

"It was an unexpected turn of events. I had gone to Bahrain for a two-month visit and was scheduled to return on March 7," said Mahalakshmi Manivannan, who was stranded in the country due to the conflict. "The government granted me a temporary visa extension, but I was stuck there for a week. I only felt relief after landing in Kochi," she told *TNIE*.

As passengers began emerging from the arrival gate one by one, the lobby filled with scenes of emotional reunions. However, for some families, the return was tinged with grief. "My ailing mother passed away on March 9. My wife and I had rushed home to see her one last time. Her remains were kept in the mortuary for a week as we waited to return," said Jose K Samuel from Pathanamthitta. "It is a relief that we could finally make it back."

He added that passengers had to undertake a long journey before reaching safety. "It was a seven-hour trip from Bahrain to safe areas in Saudi Arabia before we could board the flight," he said. Hemachandran S from Coimbatore said the situation had become increasingly difficult for his young children.

"The sounds of airstrikes and the constant sense of panic affected our children's mental peace. The situation in Bahrain had become unlivable," he said.

Three more chartered flights arranged by the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam are expected to ferry stranded passengers from Dammam to Kochi.

EDITORIAL

"The simple act of paying positive attention to people has a great deal to do with productivity" — Tom Peters

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

CREAMY LAYER RULE ROW: POLICY SPIRIT DISTORTED, COURT RESTORES BALANCE

WHEN a government clarification strays from the spirit of the policy it is meant to explain, confusion is bound to follow. The Supreme Court recently cleared up one such bureaucratic mess that began more than two decades ago. The issue concerns an Office Memorandum issued in 1993 following the Supreme Court's verdict in *Indira Sawhney* (1992). The judgement said the socially advanced 'creamy layer' among the other backward classes (OBCs) should be kept out of reservation benefits. However, a clarification issued in 2004 defeated the 1993 policy's purpose. It created artificial differences between people from the same social class who were in similar positions.

The 1993 order said OBC officers in Group A services, and some Group B officers promoted to Group A before the age of 40, would fall under the creamy layer. It also said children of people holding similar positions in public sector undertakings, banks, universities and the private sector should be treated the same way, once their jobs were found comparable to government posts.

But if such equivalence had not yet been decided, the order provided another method to identify the creamy layer. It set a limit based on residual income or wealth. Residual income meant income other than parental salary and agricultural income. In short, the 1993 policy focused on parents' status to judge social advancement. Residual income was a secondary test and did not include wages.

Unfortunately, the 2004 clarification changed this understanding. It included salary in the income test for children of people working in PSUs or the private sector when their jobs could not be compared with government posts. The clarification said a person would fall under the creamy layer if parental income or other income exceeded ₹2.5 lakh annually for three consecutive years. Because of this confusion, many civil services candidates who qualified lost the benefit of the OBC quota.

In its recent judgement, the SC strongly criticised this clarification, saying it cannot change the basic policy. It stated excluding someone solely because of parents' salary, without considering their parents' position, would be unfair. Even high salaries in Group C or Group D government posts do not make someone part of the creamy layer. Treating people in similar situations differently would go against the principle of equality. The message for India's bureaucracy is clear: it must always keep the real spirit of policy in mind.

JAL JEEVAN GETS BOOST BUT GAPS STILL REMAIN

THE Union Cabinet's decision to extend the Jal Jeevan Mission until 2028, with higher central funding, sends mixed signals. It shows the Centre is willing to go the extra mile to provide tap water to every household in the country. But it's also a quiet admission that the work remains unfinished. Last week, the government raised the total outlay of the scheme to ₹8.69 lakh crore and increased central assistance by ₹1.5 lakh crore, from ₹2.08 lakh crore to ₹3.59 lakh crore. The Centre also shifted its focus from building infrastructure to improving service delivery through structural reforms. A common digital system for transparency and accountability has also been proposed, demonstrating the government's willingness to address implementation issues.

When the mission began in 2019, the government set an ambitious five-year target. Of India's 19.35 crore rural households, only about 3.23 crore had tap-water connections then. Today, an additional 12.56 crore households have gained access, bringing coverage to over 81 percent of rural households. A major success is its impact on women, who usually carry the burden of fetching water from long distances. Easier access has improved their health and dignity. Studies also suggest the programme has helped cut under-five mortality by about 30 percent.

Yet the extension also highlights implementation gaps. Several states still remain below the national average in piped water coverage despite repeated pushes from the Centre. Rising project costs in some states and complaints about delays in the release of central funds have added to the problem. Tamil Nadu's chief minister has even written to the prime minister seeking the release of ₹3,112 crore, saying delays have slowed projects. As governance and financing concerns persist, state governments must play a stronger role in taking the scheme to the last mile. Another challenge is water quality. Government data show that of about 64 lakh samples tested in 2025-26, nearly 1.61 lakh were contaminated, which is worrying.

As climate change, groundwater depletion, and erratic rainfall increase water stress in India, pipelines without secure long-term sources may become stranded assets. The mission's extension should therefore be seen not just as a delayed deadline, but as a chance for serious course correction by the Centre and states alike to ensure a reliable, sustainably sourced water supply for all rural households in the years ahead.

QUICK TAKE

CRISIS OF PUBLIC DEBATE

GERMAN thinker Jürgen Habermas died on Saturday, leaving behind a powerful idea about democracy and public debate. He explained the "public sphere", a space where ordinary citizens discuss common issues and question those in power. Habermas said democracy needs reasoned debates in which arguments supersede status or loud voices. He warned that modern media and corporate influence can turn public discussion into a staged show, where citizens watch rather than speak. Today, loud, hostile social media often spreads anger, misinformation and speed, weakening the public voice. The true tribute to Habermas is for citizens to engage in rational-critical debate and articulate their collective will, so the government knows it and works to represent it.

China is shifting from export-led model to stable, quality growth flowing from domestic consumption and AI adoption, and looks to India as a partner in global change

FOUR SIGNALS FROM CHINA'S TWO SESSIONS

XU FEIHONG Chinese Ambassador to India

SOURAV ROY

THE Two Sessions, namely the annual plenary sessions of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, have always served as a crucial window for observing China. This year's gatherings are particularly noteworthy, as they mark the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan and coincide with a period of turbulent international dynamics and the surging tide of artificial intelligence.

I have recently returned from China after participating in the Two Sessions, with a clearer perspective on the trajectory of China's future development. I would like to share with my Indian friends four of the most salient signals, along with some reflections arising from them.

Firstly, this year's Government Work Report sets China's annual growth target at 4.5-5 percent. In the eyes of some observers, this is the lowest growth expectation in nearly four decades and may seem somewhat 'overly conservative'. In my view, this target reflects a prudent and pragmatic policy approach against the broader context of China's economic transition. It does not pursue high speed; instead, it emphasises high quality. The underlying logic is to facilitate an orderly transition from old to new growth drivers, thereby creating greater policy space for structural adjustments, systemic risk prevention and deepening reforms during the 15th Five-Year Plan period. China's economy is actively transitioning from high-speed growth to high-quality development.

As macro policies continue to take effect and a series of deep-seated reforms are implemented step by step, China's economy is expected to gradually reduce its excessive reliance on investment and exports. A new pattern is set to emerge, with domestic consumption taking the lead while technological innovation adds impetus. This will enable the economy to sustain reasonable growth while enhancing the quality of development.

Notably, this target is also consistent with China's long-term objectives through 2035. As outlined at the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, by 2035, China's per capita GDP is projected to reach the level of a moderately developed country. According to calculations by several economists, this goal can be achieved as long as China's economy maintains an average annual growth rate of above 4.17 percent over the next decade. Therefore, this year's growth target embodies a prudent and rational assessment while signalling confidence in the long-term positive trajectory of China's economy.

Second, the Government Work Report once again highlighted artificial intelligence as a keyword. For the first time, the report introduced the concept of "creating new forms of smart economy". The essential goal is to seize the revolutionary opportunities presented by AI, empowering a wide spectrum of industries and fostering new business models and growth drivers.

Specifically, China plans to accelerate the construction of a unified national computing power network, leveraging the advantage of its robust power system. In the future, computing power, like water and electricity, will become a fundamental utility for social operations. It will provide a stable and sufficient energy source for the AI industry and wider economic system.

At the same time, China is also accelerating the large-scale application of terminal products such as AI smartphones, AI laptops and intelligent connected vehicles, aiming to bring AI technology into every family as soon as possible. At the industrial level, efforts are being made to promote the deep integration of AI with sectors such as industry, agriculture, education and healthcare through the development of public cloud platforms and the cultivation of high-quality open-source projects—providing new tools for industrial upgrading and social governance.

China is, so to speak, progressing from a 'digital economy' to a more sophisticated stage: call it 'smart economy'.

The third signal relates to opening up to the world, for long a vital driving force for China's development. The Government Work Report reaffirms that China will encourage foreign enterprises to expand investment and enhance localisation, signalling that China's pace of advancing such openness will not falter, especially where it makes a qualitative difference.

China's negative list for foreign investment access has been reduced to 29 items. All market access restrictions on foreign investment in the manufacturing sector have been fully lifted. Looking ahead, the focus of opening up will shift to the services sector, with orderly expansion of market access in areas such as telecommunications, the internet, education, culture and healthcare.

As the world's second-largest import market, China saw its total retail sales of consumer goods surpass 50 trillion yuan (approximately $7.28 trillion) for the first time in 2025. Consumption of services is also growing rapidly, with per capita consumption expenditure on services accounting for 46.1 percent of total household spending last year. China's middle-income group—now exceeding 400 million—continues to expand. Such a vast scale of consumption implies sustained demand for high-quality goods and services, generating abundant opportunities for enterprises worldwide.

The fourth signal was captured at a press conference during the Two Sessions, where Indian media noted that foreign minister Wang Yi addressed only four bilateral relationships in separate responses—and China-India relations were one of them. This vividly reflects the importance China attaches to developing its relations with India.

Under the guidance of Chinese and Indian leaders in recent years, our relations have steadily improved, with bilateral trade hitting a record high of $155.6 billion in 2025. As significant neighbours to each other and members of the Global South, China and India share not only profound historical and people-to-people ties, but also wide-ranging common interests in development. Spanning thousands of miles and millennia—from ancient civilisational exchanges to contemporary development cooperation—China-India relations have long transcended the bilateral scope. It bears significance not only for the collective rise of the Global South but also for the stability and development of the world.

China stands ready to work with India to strengthen communication and enhance mutual trust, with development as the biggest common denominator. This year, India holds the Brics presidency, to be followed by China next year. The two sides can take this opportunity to deepen practical cooperation and strive for more tangible outcomes, jointly writing a new chapter in bilateral relations. I have full confidence in the future of China-India relations.

(Views are personal)

THE CIVILITY CODE

RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

IN today's turbulent atmosphere, I would like to recall how I was brought up, much like many others across Indian communities. My elders, born in the late 1920s, disdained and discarded caste distinctions and many old taboos, especially about food, because the conditions that led to those distinctions no longer applied as we branched off into non-traditional professions.

I was brought up first by my mother and then by my paternal aunt, both independent working women. My mother, a treasured child raised by progressive parents, was quietly subversive though she observed the Savitri Vrat and the Varalakshmi Puja with grace.

My father's sister was a rebel, outside the pale of organised religion from an early age, having seen the cruelty of orthodoxy at close quarters. She eventually left the Communist Party of India too in protest after the Soviet Union invaded Hungary, though she abided by the better principles of the Left movement up until her dying day.

Besides holding responsible jobs, both women were curiously alike in key ways. I was taught the habit of prayer by my mother and did not hide it when I began to write on religion and culture, which inevitably led to scorn and suspicion from some quarters. But both my mother and my aunt viewed religion as a private matter. They made it clear that there was an inner world and an outer world, the latter mediated by strict codes of citizenly behaviour.

It was considered vulgar to speak loudly, and it was entirely forbidden to speak impatiently to servants, subordinates, strangers and elders. My grandparents were like that, too, scornful of caste and unhealthy superstition while respecting the right to belief across communities as long as it did not insult or oppress others in the name of 'God'.

I think I was fortunate to be raised first by a liberal, modern Hindu and then by a liberal 'Lefty', both truly liberal in terms of civilly accepting the right to differ. The keyword in both cases was 'civilly'.

Just so, I find that I now have friends who are deeply Hindu, nominally Hindu, of another persuasion, agnostic, atheist; Indian, from the Indic bandwidth or unfamiliar with matters Indian. But we meet in good fellowship and share opinions, books and films.

The vegetarians remain vegetarian, the 'egg-only' eat their omelettes, the meat-eaters set out kebabs and biryani, the teetotallers stick to rasam or nimbupani and the gin-drinkers argue amicably about artisanal brews.

They happen to be from wildly different backgrounds. Some say they're keeping roza; others say the Navratras or Pitrupaksh are underway. None of them would gloat heartlessly on X if someone with differing views were killed for that. Their beliefs and lifestyles may be worlds apart, but what unites them is a common decency.

AFP

> I was fortunate enough to be raised by progressive and independent women who, despite their different ideological stances, were truly liberal in terms of civilly accepting the right to differ. While obnoxious men continue to be celebrated, not all women escape from a constant oversight of moral decency

We also need to address ghastly situations like this, which continue to happen even now. Back in 2017, auto-driver Uday Chand of Bihar and his wife Lakshmi, drugged their teenage daughters Jyoti and Priti and threw them into a canal because they suspected them of having boyfriends.

The girls were rescued a day later, when passersby spotted them floating in the water. They were rushed to a local hospital, where Jyoti died.

According to news reports, the police said Priti was 'initially evasive and furnished false names'. She also told police that they were orphans, used to begging near a local temple, and fell unconscious after eating food offered by a stranger. This aroused the police's suspicions, since the girls did not look like beggars.

After the police counselled her, Priti told them what really happened. Isn't it grotesquely moving that she tried to protect her parents?

The police charged the parents with murder and attempted murder, and launched a manhunt for the absconding couple. I don't recall any follow-up news.

This sad story reminds me of how an elegant young woman once told me she despaired of ever finding a partner who was the perfect mix of a chivalrous knight who'd fight for her and a modern man who was self-controlled, polished and balanced.

"Looks like only Sri Ram will do," I said spontaneously and knew at once that I should duck; that I would have grenades with 'Sita' on them lobbed at me. So, I read aloud 19th-century French writer Guy de Maupassant's short story *The Model* to my young friend, who was horrified and diverted. *The Model* is famous as a dark, cynical short story about Jean Sumner, a celebrated painter trapped in a miserable marriage to his former model, Josephine. Tiring of her manipulative nature, he tried to leave. After she jumped out of the window and broke her legs to force his commitment, he is shackled to her out of guilt and views his marriage as a curse. The woman is the villain here.

As we conversed, we began to wonder why men who behaved obnoxiously towards women were nevertheless awarded and celebrated, as actors Casey Affleck, Mel Gibson and Marlon Brando were, or as directors Woody Allen, Roman Polanski and Bernardo Bertolucci were. My friend said it herself: "White men get Oscars though they abuse women, their pictures are splashed in Indian papers with adulatory articles. So, how come our Ram, who was nothing like them, is a bad guy? Does their art excuse them?"

No, it does not, and Ram remains the king of hearts. Uday Chand and Lakshmi were only slightly different from those foreign celebrities. It all comes back to civility, as moral decency towards our fellow beings, don't you think?

(Views are personal)

(shebaba09@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Petro-imperialism

Ref: *Butterfly effect* (Mar 15). If we look at the history, especially last three hundred years, war is fought not for peace but for commodities. The most unfortunate thing is that the UN stands as a mute spectator. Donald Trump has proven that 'democratic dictators' can cleverly camouflage themselves as champions of human rights.

S A Srinivasa Sarma, Hyderabad

Households suffer

Ref: *Winners and losers of war* (Mar 15). The author's analysis cuts to the core of a hard truth. Rising crude prices and the weakening rupee are not abstract figures; they affect every household. India's silence on mediation is understandable politically, but costly economically. We must use diplomatic channels to push for early de-escalation. Strategic ambiguity has its limits.

A Myilsami, Coimbatore

Real emotions

Ref: *Defying AI with a little help from poetry* (Mar 15). Poetry demands lived experience, emotional honesty and cultural memory—things no algorithm truly possesses. Encouraging creative writing in schools would be a practical step. When young minds learn to think originally, AI becomes a tool, not a threat. Human creativity, rooted in real emotion and tradition, will always hold ground that technology cannot occupy.

S M Jeeva, email

Gas hoarders

Ref: *Two LPG tankers clear Hormuz* (Mar 15). Black marketeers have the uncanny knack of creating artificial scarcity by surreptitiously hoarding gas cylinders to sell at a premium to the needy ones. Such nefarious designs must be curbed at once.

H P Murali, Bengaluru

Sanju's resilience

Ref: *Samson strikes* (Mar 15). Sanju is a refreshing portrayal of perseverance and quiet resilience in modern cricket. His individual feats reflect the aspirations of countless young cricketers from smaller cricketing pockets across the country.

Subbaraman V, Tiruchirappalli

Buried tragedies

Ref: *IPL's challenges* (Mar 15). Public memory is very short. It's often proven by people who simultaneously adore undesirable social elements and allow them to occupy seats of power. The same goes with cricket as the rush to buy fresh tickets will push aside all memories of last year's tragedy.

V S Ganeshan, Bengaluru

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POSTS OF THE DAY

D. Raja @ComradeDRaja
The ECI is constitutionally mandated to conduct free and fair elections and ensure a level playing field for all political parties. This fairness has been visibly absent

Omar Abdullah @OmarAbdullah
Got a sneak preview of Asia's largest tulip garden in Srinagar earlier today. The garden is still 7-8 days away from its full bloom but it's already bursting with colour.

Yogi Adityanath @myogiadityanath
Who are the people who are once again dividing society on the basis of casteism...These are the same people who had said that Shri Ram and Shri Krishna never existed...

Modi sends 'letter' praise to Birla after no-trust win

PM's endorsement comes after LS Speaker faced attack from Oppn

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday commended Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for conducting the House proceedings with "dedication, patience, and impartiality", saying that his actions would strengthen the country's parliamentary democracy.

In a letter to Birla, the PM congratulated the members of the House for rejecting "political misconduct" by defeating the Opposition's no-confidence motion brought against the Speaker. He said the resolution brought against the Speaker was driven by motives of self-interest and that certain individuals steeped in "dynastic mindset" want to confine democratic institutions within their own narrow spheres.

Expressing gratitude for the letter, Birla said the PM has always held an unwavering faith in the rules, procedures, and traditions of India's parliamentary democracy.

In his letter, Modi said, "I listened attentively to the statement you (Speaker) delivered in the House following the defeat of the no-confidence motion. Your statement served as a profound and measured exposition of Indian parliamentary traditions and democratic propriety."

Rahul seeks Bharat Ratna for Kanshi Ram

In a letter to PM, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday urged him to confer the Bharat Ratna on BSP founder Kanshi Ram posthumously, saying this would honour the aspirations of millions who view him as a symbol of empowerment and hope. Gandhi said Kanshi Ram transformed the nature of Indian politics and through his movements, raised political awareness among Bahujans and the poor.

The greatest strength of Indian democracy lies in its constitutional institutions, Modi said, adding Parliament stands as the supreme forum among these institutions. "Differences of opinion are inherent in a democracy. Indeed, it is the diversity of ideas that infuses democracy with vitality. However, it is equally true that there exists a distinct demarcation between disagreement and disrespect," the PM said. It is a matter of concern for all those who place their faith in democracy and its institutions that, at times, political disagreement appears to morph into a disregard for parliamentary decorum, Modi said. Such moments, he said, serve as a true test for the individual occupying the Chair.

In response, Birla said, "Your letter articulates those highest ethical values of public service that you have embodied throughout your long public life...You have always held a deep belief in the fundamental nature of Parliament-- dialogue, debate, and deliberation. You prioritise parliamentary proceedings above all else and strive to find solutions to every issue raised within the House."

First batch of medical students arrives from Iran after flight restart

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

NEARLY 70 out of 101 medical students, who left war-torn Iran on Saturday, reached Indira Gandhi International Airport on Sunday via Armenia and Dubai. Another batch of over 80 students, stranded at the Iran border, are presently unable to enter Azerbaijan due to visa issues.

A FlyDubai flight landed at Delhi at 9.45 am. After immigration clearances, most of the students boarded buses or flights to leave for their native places in Jammu & Kashmir. A few hours earlier, another flight landed at Mumbai airport carrying nearly 30 students who were studying in Iran.

The Indian Embassy in Iran facilitated the safe travel of the students up to Armenia from where they left by flight to Dubai and then by separate flights to Mumbai and Delhi. Students who reached Delhi were studying at Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Tehran University of Medical Sciences and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences.

Dr Mohammed Momin Khan, national vice president of the All India Medical Students Association (AIMSA), said, "The students were in an angry frame of mind and did not want to interact with anyone. They wanted the government of India to do more for them.

Stuck at Azerbaijan border

The batch of students from Islamic Azad University and Iran University of Medical Sciences who have reached Azerbaijan are stuck on the Iran side of its border due to visa issues. "A parent said that the country used to process 50 visas per day but has reduced it to only 15 visas per day. The Indian Embassy is actively working on this," Khan added.

They have spent a lot of money to reach India." Apart from spending ₹3,000 for their bus journey to Armenia, they had to pay for their hotel stay as well as the flight fare which cost above ₹60,000 per ticket.

Khan added that buses were arranged by the J&K government at the airport for the students to travel towards Kashmir. "However, only six students used the government buses while the rest chose to travel on their own through private buses or by flights," he added.

INSIDER TRACK

Congress flip on Deputy Speaker

The long-vacant post of Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha has once again become a political flashpoint. During the recent debate on the no-confidence motion against Speaker Om Birla, several Opposition members—especially from the Congress—criticised the government for not filling the position for nearly sevenyears. However, insiders suggest the Congress itself may not have shown the urgency it now claims to have. According to sources, a senior party leader had earlier suggested moving a motion in Parliament urging the government to hold the election. The proposal was reportedly discouraged by the party leadership. Parliamentary rules allow any MP to raise the issue through a motion or resolution.

BJP plans 30-member 'Team Nitin'

The BJP is preparing to form a new group, informally called 'Team Nitin'. The group is expected to help president Nitin Nabin with planning and organisational work. According to sources, the team may have around 25–30 members, ensuring representation from many regions. Among the names are former IPS officer-turned-politician Annamalai from Tamil Nadu and Anand Mishra from Bihar. Other names include Pradeep Sinha, Ravinder Raina, VD Sharma, Harish Dwivedi, Ramesh Bidhuri, Nishikant Dubey, Sudhakar Reddy, Tarun Chugh, Captain Abhimanyu and KP Maurya. The team is expected to assist in strategy building, messaging, and documentation to counter Opposition narratives.

Arif Md Khan waiting for new role

Political circles speculate about the future role of former Bihar Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, recently replaced by Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain. Known for his scholarly views and articulate public commentary, Khan is regarded as an influential Muslim voice in public life. Some BJP insiders hint that PM Modi may have a significant responsibility in mind for him, including a Union Cabinet position to another constitutional assignment. The reasons behind his sudden replacement remain unclear. Some observers recall his visit last year to the residence of Bihar Opposition leader Rabri Devi, which reportedly raised eyebrows within political circles.

Parking hierarchy in Central Vista

The newly built Kartavya Bhawans along Kartavya Path were designed as modern offices for central government departments, but the limited parking space has created unexpected problems for employees. Entry is now restricted to vehicles carrying official parking labels issued only to select categories of officials. As a result, many staff members without these tags are forced to park on roads outside the complex. Searching for parking spots is now an extra task. The situation has created a subtle sense of hierarchy within the workplace, where something as basic as parking seems linked to rank than need.

Babus' lateral entry losing steam

The government's push for lateral entry into senior bureaucratic positions appears to have slowed considerably. The initiative was introduced to bring outside expertise into policymaking by recruiting professionals at the Director and Joint Secretary levels. However, some joinees say they feel sidelined within ministries dominated by career bureaucrats. Others report facing resistance or dismissive attitudes, or hearing remarks that "non-UPSC people cannot reach our level". Concerns about reservations for lateral-entry appointments also added political pressure, further slowing the process. Even institutions like NITI Aayog have seen uncertainty among lateral recruits about their future.

CAPF veterans seek PM intervention

Veterans of the Central Armed Police Forces are closely watching developments around the Centre's proposed CAPF Bill, reportedly to address the implications of a Supreme Court order that granted organised service status to cadre officers of forces like the CRPF and BSF. Many veterans fear the move may dilute the impact of the ruling and continue the dominance of IPS officers on deputation in senior posts. Since serving personnel are not allowed to form associations, their concerns are being raised informally on online platforms. The IPS lobby is believed to have argued for retaining key leadership positions. Veterans now pin their hopes on a meeting PM Modi has convened on Monday.

Govt ignoring major rural schemes, giving funds to G RAM G: House panel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

A Parliamentary panel has expressed concern over the budgetary allocation for the Department of Rural Development for 2026-27, noting that while the total outlay has increased by 21%, the bulk of the increase is earmarked for the new VB-GRAMG scheme. The committee highlighted that funds for existing programmes remain static, while the allocation for MGNREGA has been sharply reduced.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, in its report tabled in Parliament last week, said the Department of Rural Development (DoRD) has been entrusted with the task of implementing schemes aimed at the upliftment of rural masses and therefore it is imperative that flagship programmes are not "left in the lurch" for want of adequate financial support.

The committee noted that ₹2,28,768.81 crore has been allocated to the department at the Budget Estimates (BE) stage for 2026-27, which is 21.20% higher than the BE for 2025-26. However, the report pointed out that ₹95,692.31 crore has been allocated solely to VB-GRAMG.

"Therefore, barring VB-GRAMG, funds for other major schemes like PMGSY, PMAY-G, DAY-NRLM and NSAP have been kept static and moreover, funds for MGNREGA has been drastically reduced to ₹30,000 crore," the report stated.

The panel also said such allocation is "inadequate" and "may be suitably enhanced". It noted that pending liabilities under MGNREGA are expected to approach nearly ₹25,000 crore by the end of the year.

The panel also observed a gap between allocation and spending the previous year. Against an allocation of ₹1,86,995.61 crore in 2025-26, actual expenditure at the Revised Estimates stage stood at ₹99,090.47 crore.

The report recommended that the department prepare quarterly and monthly expenditure plans in advance in consultation with stakeholders.

Army inducts 7th regiment of Pinaka rocket launchers

JAVARIA RANA @ New Delhi

THE Indian Army has added another Pinaka regiment and is preparing to induct one more by the end of the year, as it expands rocket artillery capability along the western and northern frontiers, it is learnt.

"The seventh regiment has already been operationalised. The eighth has been raised and has received more than half its equipment. It is currently undergoing conversion and should become operational before the end of the year," sources in the defence establishment said.

Two more regiments from a batch of six ordered in 2020 are expected to be operationalised next year, which will take the total number of Pinaka regiments in service to ten.

The Army had ordered four Pinaka regiments between 2010 and 2020, with expansion accelerating after the Galwan Valley clash. The same year, the defence ministry inked contracts worth about ₹2,580 crore with BEML, Tata Power Company Limited and Larsen & Toubro for six additional Pinaka regiments. The order included 114 launchers equipped with Automated Gun Aiming and Positioning Systems, 45 command posts and 330 support vehicles.

15 rocket artillery regiments in place currently

At present, the Army fields about 15 rocket artillery regiments across three platforms; seven Pinaka regiments, three Russian-origin Smerch systems and five older BM-21 Grad units. The Army plans to gradually replace the ageing Grad systems with additional Pinaka units, with long-term plans to expand the Pinaka fleet to about 22 regiments.

In artillery parlance, a regiment typically comprises three batteries. Each battery operates six Pinaka launchers, giving a regiment 18 launchers.

The Army fields multiple variants of the Pinaka system with progressively longer strike ranges. In December last year, DRDO successfully tested a long-range guided rocket from a Pinaka launcher at a range of about 120 km with accuracy.

The requirement for a long-range, deep-strike rocket capability was identified during Operation Sindoor, following which the Army acquired two Indo-Israeli Suryastra long-range rocket launcher system.

During Operation Sindoor, Pakistan had fired a Fatah-II guided rocket which was intercepted by Indian air defence units. Pakistan has claimed that the system has a range of up to 400 km. In August last year, the country also announced an Army Rocket Force Command to manage long-range rockets and missiles, modelled on its ally, China.

Meanwhile, China's PLA Ground Force operates systems such as the PHL-16 multiple launch rocket system, claimed to fire guided rockets to about 130 km and tactical missiles approaching 290 km. Integrated with satellites, drones and digital command networks, these systems allow Chinese forces to detect and strike targets inside contested areas along the LAC.

Environment ministry accepts expert panel names for definition of Aravalli

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Union Environment Ministry has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court in the Aravalli matter and stated that it has no objection to the Central Empowered Committee's proposed 10-member high-powered expert committee, which has been tasked to come up with a uniform definition for the Aravalli hills and ranges.

In an affidavit filed before the top court, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has endorsed the names suggested for the high-powered expert committee comprising in-service and retired bureaucrats associated with the Forest Survey of India, Geological Survey of India and Survey of India, along with academicians.

The affidavit said the panel would be chaired by Kanchan Devi, Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education (ICFRE), a 1991-batch Indian Forest Service officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre with more than 30 years of experience in forestry, wildlife, policy, and institutional leadership.

Panel to be chaired by 1991-batch IFS officer

The affidavit said the panel would be chaired by Kanchan Devi, Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education, a 1991-batch Indian Forest Service officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre with more than 30 years of experience in forestry and policy.

It further submitted that it has no objection if the court accepts the aforesaid suggested name for the constitution of the proposed committee.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the case in a week's time, as it will go through the affidavit and likely pass certain orders in the matter.

The bench took suo motu proceedings of the definition of Aravalli on December 29, after concerns were raised that the revised definition could permit unregulated mining which could have a devastating effect on the environment.

A three-judge bench of the apex court, headed by the Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, had earlier requested the Ministry to suggest a panel of domain experts (on mining issues) along with their profiles.

It also asked the advocates appearing in the matter from all the respective parties to suggest eminent subject experts' names for the committee.

Green ammonia project remains a non-starter

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

IN a frantic effort to secure a stable supply of natural gas for ammonia production amid the US-Israel attack on Iran, which has disrupted supply routes, India is missing the opportunity to boost its local production of green ammonia.

Green ammonia is used to manufacture agricultural fertilisers, vital for maintaining food security in a war-torn world. Ammonia is the main ingredient for producing Di Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertiliser. Although the Centre fixed the price for local production of green ammonia more than six months ago, it has yet to sign purchase and supply agreements with local manufacturers to produce 724 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of the gas. The delay in finalising agreements jeopardises India's plans to become a global leader in green ammonia production. However, the government said it has enough time till the target.

Green ammonia agreements with local manufacturers would assure them that the government will purchase their ammonia for the fertiliser industry. Developers who are supposed to set up plants are concerned about the delay.

"The government fixed the price and provided a letter of assurance around eight months ago, but there is still no indication of when the agreements will be signed and when we can start our business," said one of the 13 developers who won the government contract signed last August. He said the prices fixed by the government may become unfeasible if the delay continues. "Some developers may choose to withdraw from the contract," he added.

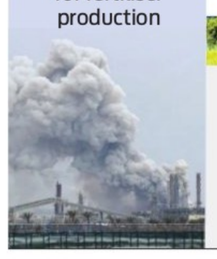
India imports over 70% of nearly 30 million MT of grey ammonia, sourced from fossil fuels, primarily from Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain. These suppliers are now facing attacks from Iran. Unlike grey ammonia, green ammonia is produced using green hydrogen derived from water, which then reacts with environmental nitrogen. India plans to use its own domestic electrolysis technology to produce green ammonia, making the country less vulnerable to market fluctuations.

"No one knows why the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) is sitting on the approval proposal despite many reminders," said a senior officer. "The current war-like situation could have provided an opportunity to ramp up green ammonia production instead of waiting for the conflict to end," the official said.

MNRE Secretary Santosh Sarangi said there is enough time as supplies are to be made from 2028-29. "The fertiliser department has asked the plants to get their board approvals for signing of purchase and supply agreements. It will be done in due course," Sarangi said.

Manufacturing ammonia is carbon-intensive. Under the Paris Agreement, India is obligated to reduce emissions by transitioning to green ammonia.

Ongoing US-Israel attacks on Iran have disrupted supply chains, affecting India's ability to secure ammonia crucial for fertiliser production



Fertiliser fallout

The Centre has further delayed signing agreements with local manufacturers, slowing progress on domestic green ammonia production

Developers are concerned about the delay and are seeking an early go-ahead to set up manufacturing plants

India remains heavily import-dependent, meeting over 70% of its ammonia needs from abroad, mainly from Gulf countries

WEDDING BELLS

Fifty-one couples, including those from economically weaker sections and differently abled persons, tied the nuptial knot at a mass marriage ceremony in Udaipur.

2 MINORS KILLED IN ACCIDENT IN J'KHAND'S JAMSHEDPUR

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	37	22	Mumbai	29	24
Bhopal	34	21	Panaji	31	23
Jaipur	33	18	Patna	34	20
Amritsar	22	12	Lucknow	33	18
Chennai	31	25	Port Blair	29	27
Kolkata	33	23	Imphal	24	14
Srinagar	07	01	Chandigarh	23	14

EC brings down election phases to two this time from eight in 2021 • Opposition plans to target BJP on justice for Zubeen and corruption

TMC, BJP see advantage in 'shorter' Bengal polls

SUBHENDU MAITI & RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ Kolkata/New Delhi

THE Assembly poll battle in West Bengal, one of the sensitive states for election violence, will take place in two phases next month, a sharp drop from the eight-phase voting held in 2021. Most of the parties, except the ruling Trinamool Congress, had urged the Election Commission to conduct elections in one or two phases to prevent violence. The TMC has expressed displeasure over for the two-phase elections.

"In the 2021 assembly elections, BJP had demanded elections in eight phases though we had requested the EC to wrap it up in four phases in view of the Covid pandemic. This time, it will be held in two phases because of the BJP's demand," TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said. "BJP's number of winning seats will come down to 27 this time from 77 they had won in 2021. We will come back again irrespective of the poll phases. TMC workers are always with people during their crisis," he added.

BJP campaign banks on 'Parivartan Yatras'

The BJP has been preparing for months, conducting nine 'Parivartan Yatras' across the state to galvanise support and showcase its organisational strength. The BJP's campaign focuses on key criticisms of the TMC, including on law and order, infiltration, corruption, and appeasement politics.

Welcoming the EC announcement, Bengal BJP president Samik Bhattacharya said, "People will see a new government led by BJP in Bengal within a few days and we will run the government from the Writers' Buildings, instead of Nabanna, state secretariat. We will implement all our schemes, including ₹3000 to women per month and implementation of DA of state government employees, within 42 days after the election results." CPI-M state secretary Md Salim said, "We will see whether the EC can hold elections without fear, favour and violence. We will keep watch on whether all dead voters are removed from the list and every genuine voters, including 60 lakh belong to logical discrepancies, are included in the electoral rolls."

Political analyst Subhomoy Moitra said, "The significant part is how far the commission can protect the democratic rights of every voter through fair and peaceful elections in Bengal. The number of phases hardly matters if people cannot vote without fear. We still are in dark about the fate of the 60 lakh voters in 'under adjudication' category." Assembly elections in the state were held in two phases in 1976 when the CPI-M-led Left Front had formed the government.

The BJP has been preparing for months, conducting nine 'Parivartan Yatras' across the state to galvanise support and showcase its organisational strength. As infiltration has been highlighted as a major poll issue, the party has meticulously divided the state into three zones to execute its electoral strategy. "A year ago, we began grassroots work to bring 'parivartan' (change) in Bengal. Now, we have coverage down to the booth level," a BJP functionary said.

The BJP's campaign focuses on key criticisms of the TMC, including on law and order, infiltration, corruption, and appeasement politics. The party has reportedly planned over a dozen mega rallies for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "For the BJP, winning Bengal is the most demanding task, as the people seek change. This election is more crucial for us than contests in other states," the functionary added.

More Central forces to be put on election job

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

WEST Bengal, which has witnessed more protests against the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls than any other state, is set for the largest-ever deployment of Central paramilitary forces for the high-stakes assembly elections. All polling stations will be fully webcast to ensure transparent and peaceful elections, officials said.

Ahead of the polls, the Centre has already deployed 480 companies of central forces to the state for area domination, confidence building measures, poll day duty and guarding EVM strongrooms. Sources in the chief electoral officer's office indicated over 2,000 companies could be required to keep Bengal peaceful till the counting of votes.

Cong to take on Sarma's 'minority' pitch in Assam

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

THE spotlight will be on identity politics, development initiatives, welfare schemes, alleged corruption and the controversy surrounding singer-musician Zubeen Garg's "murder" when Assam goes to election on April 9.

After 25 years, the state is going to a single-phase poll. The opposition party Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) alleged that the Election Commission's decision to complete the election process within just three weeks would benefit the ruling BJP.

The poll will witness a contest between the BJP-led NDA and the Congress-led five-party Opposition alliance. In both formations, the BJP and the Congress will contest from most seats. The BJP has renewed its alliance with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and the Rabha Hasong Joutha Mancha.

According to the BJP-BPF understanding, the BJP will contest from four of the 15 seats in Bodoland, while the BPF will contest from the remaining 11 seats. These 15 seats will be crucial for the BJP considering the anti-incumbency factor. The BJP-AGP seat-sharing deal is awaiting the BJP central leadership's nod. On the other hand, the Congress has forged an alliance with AJP, CPM, CPI(ML) and the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference.

The BJP under CM Himanta Biswa Sarma has, to some extent, managed to whip up an anti-Bangladeshi sentiment in a state where the original inhabitants faced demographic changes over the past several decades. Through a series of eviction drives, the BJP government reclaimed 1.51 lakh bighas of land from the illegal occupation of "infiltrators".

Assam witnessed noteworthy infrastructure development over the past ten years. The BJP takes pride over clean employment, stating that 1.65 lakh youth secured government jobs in the past five years. All these factors, coupled with the welfare scheme "Orunodoi", under which 40 lakh women beneficiaries receive ₹1,250 per month, may keep the BJP in good stead in the poll.

As for the Congress, that ruled Assam between 2001 and 2016 but lost every election thereafter, it will try to regain the lost ground. The Congress got rejuvenated after Jorhat MP Gaurav Gogoi was appointed as its state president. The Congress will go hard at the BJP for failing to give "justice" to Garg, alleged corruption by the BJP and failure to grant ST status to six communities.

BJP, Cong to contest most seats in alliances

The poll will witness a contest between the BJP-led NDA and the Congress-led five-party Opposition alliance. In both, the BJP and the Congress will contest from most seats.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah being felicitated with a traditional Assamese hat during the 'Yuva Shakti Samaroh' in Guwahati on Sunday | PTI

POLL-ITICALLY

Polls will be held in two phases because of the BJP's demand. We will come back again irrespective of the poll phases. TMC workers are always with people during their crisis.
Kunal Ghosh, TMC

We will see if the EC can hold polls without fear, favour and violence. We will keep watch on whether all dead voters are removed from the list and every genuine voters are included in the electoral rolls
Md Salim, CPI-M

Only the BJP can make Assam infiltrator-free. The Congress had legalised, formalised and normalised infiltration. Each one of the infiltrators will be driven out. This is the BJP's promise
Amit Shah, Home Minister

Cong turned Assam into infiltrator haven: Shah

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday made a vitriolic attack on the Congress in election-bound Assam, accusing it of legalising, formalising and normalising the infiltration of Bangladeshis, even as CM Himanta Biswa Sarma promised two lakh jobs if the BJP retains power.

Addressing the BJP's 'Yuva Shakti Samaroh' in Guwahati, Shah alleged that the Congress, during its 15-year rule in Assam (2001-16), had turned the state into a land of infiltrators. "We had promised that we would rid Assam of the infiltrators. CM Sarma freed 1.51 lakh bighas of government lands that were encroached upon by the infiltrators. Give us the mandate for the third time; we will drive out the infiltrators, not just from Assam but from the entire country," Shah declared. He further stated that the illegal migrants, who entered Assam's Dhubri, Barpeta, Darrang, Morigaon, Bongaigaon, Nagaon and Goalpara districts, would be driven out after an investigation.

"Only the BJP can make Assam infiltrator-free. The Congress had legalised, formalised and normalised infiltration," the Home Minister alleged.

Taking on Rahul Gandhi, he said the Congress leader had opposed the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls as the names of the infiltrators were being deleted. "Each one of the infiltrators will be driven out," Shah said.

AIMIM backs Mahagath bandhan candidate in Bihar Rajya Sabha poll

It followed an Iftar hosted by AIMIM, attended by Tejashwi

IFTAR AIDS OPPN ALLIANCE

AIMIM's **5** MLAs will support Amarendra Dhari Singh of RJD

Mahagathbandhan has **35** MLAs (**25** from Rashtriya Janata Dal); **41** needed to win

EVEN WITH AIMIM, SUPPORT OF **1** BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY MLA IS REQUIRED

Six candidates contesting for **5** positions. RS seats to fall vacant on **April 9**

OWAISI ASSURES SUPPORT TO OPPN FOR BIHAR RS SEAT

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

IN a boost to the prospects of Mahagathbandhan winning a seat in the Rajya Sabha election, the Owaisi-led AIMIM on Sunday announced that it would support the opposition alliance's candidate.

The breakthrough came after RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav also attended an Iftar party, hosted by AIMIM, at the residence of the state AIMIM president Akhtarul Iman.

After the Iftar party, Iman announced that the party's all five MLAs would support Mahagathbandhan candidate Amarendra Dhari Singh in the Rajya Sabha elections to be held on Monday. Tejashwi said, "Akhtarul Iman from the AIMIM party had invited us for Iftar, and we have arrived here today for the Iftar. We have sought support from the AIMIM party, and I am confident that in tomorrow's Rajya Sabha election, all secular parties will come together to defeat the BJP..."

Leaving nothing to chance, the RJD MLAs have been moved to a posh hotel in Patna to preempt any possibility of a split within the ranks or cross-voting. Sabha seats in the state.

Notably, NDA leaders held a series of meetings ahead of the elections. A major meeting of NDA leaders was convened by JD(U) national working president Sanjay Kumar Jha at his residence. Bihar Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary on Sunday expressed confidence that all five NDA candidates would emerge victorious in the Rajya Sabha polls. He went as far as saying that this was certain.

It may be noted that Union Minister Harsh Malhotra and Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, who happen to be the BJP's central observers for the Rajya Sabha polls in Bihar, were also in attendance at the meeting.

Leh, Kargil protests to take place today

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

THE Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) have decided to go ahead with the mega protest rallies in Leh and Kargil districts and shutdown in Kargil in Ladakh UT on Monday against delay in talks with the Centre on the 6th Schedule and statehood.

Both groups have also demanded the release of two more detainees in addition to the withdrawal of cases against all 80, rejecting the administration's outreach to defer the agitation despite climate activist Sonam Wangchuk's release.

KDA co-chairman Asgar Karbalai, told this newspaper, "The Kargil district will also be observing a shutdown while Leh will remain open".

The decision follows an outreach by the administration seeking to persuade the leaders to postpone the protests.

According to Karbalai, the Ladakh chief secretary had approached leaders of both KDA and LAB and sought deferment of the protests. "However, we have decided to go ahead with the protest rallies and shutdown in Kargil, as the chief secretary had nothing concrete to offer," he added.

It would be a major show and the biggest mobilisation in Ladakh after the September 24, 2025, protest rally in Leh, in which four persons were killed and 80 others injured in police firing. While welcoming the release of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk from jail after six months, Karbalai termed it an "incomplete step".

"Two senior leaders, including former MLA Deldan Namgial and former councilor Smanla Dorjey, remain in detention, while 78 others are out on bail. We demand withdrawal of cases against all the 80 persons besides due compensation to the injured and justice to four killed in September 24, 2025, violence," he added.

Karbalai reiterated that the core demands of the agitation remain the grant of Sixth Schedule status and full statehood for Ladakh, along with the resumption of stalled dialogue with the Centre. The last round of talks between Ladakh leaders and the Centre was held on February 4. The proposal, however, was rejected by Ladakh leaders.

Infiltration bid foiled, 1 terrorist killed at LoC

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

THE Army on Sunday said troops foiled an infiltration bid along the LoC in the Uri sector of J&K's Baramulla by killing a militant. It was the third infiltration attempt of militants foiled by troops in 11 days.

Srinagar-based Army's 15 Corps, in a post on X, said based on specific intelligence input provided by police regarding an infiltration attempt, a joint operation was launched by the army and police on the intervening night of March 14/15 in the general area of Buchhar in the Uri sector in Baramulla district. Troops spotted suspicious movement in the thicket, it said. In the ensuing firefight, a militant was killed.

Construction halted at J'khand 'Queen of Hills'

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

ALL construction activities have been put on halt in Netarhat, popularly known as the 'Queen of Hills' in Jharkhand.

The development took place following a report published in 'The New Indian Express' on November 29, highlighting the rapid and unchecked construction activities in Netarhat, which threatens the region's fragile ecosystem. The authorities have initiated action against those involved in the constructions. Notably, Netarhat is an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ), which falls within the buffer zone of the Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR).

According to a Gazette notification issued by the Government of India in 2019, construction of any new commercial hotels or resorts in Netarhat is completely prohibited, existing hotels cannot be expanded, and only local residents may build houses for personal use.

Despite that, over the past five years, a huge number of hotels have mushroomed in the region, due to which it appears quite different from the intended status. Consequently, PTR Deputy Director has issued notices to the owners of both under-construction and constructed hotels, seeking explanations regarding the ongoing work, asking them to stop all kinds of construction. The notice asks them to clarify whether they had obtained permission from the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) Monitoring Committee or any other competent authority and whether the construction activities complied with the regulations applicable within the ESZ area before the work began.

Notably, the report was published in 'The New Indian Express, following which the matter was raised by local environmental activists, prompting authorities to issue notices on December 18.

Officials said that notices have been served and further action will be taken against those whose responses are found unsatisfactory.

"Yes, we have issued notices to a total of 90 such people whose projects are either under construction or they have already constructed their hotels or any other commercial projects seeking explanation from them that whether they have adhered to or complied with the regulations applicable within the ESZ area before the work began," said PTR Deputy Director (South Division) Kumar Ashish. Meanwhile, all construction work has been stopped till further instructions from the ESZ Monitoring Committee, he added.

Encroachments put J'khand 'queen of hills' at risk

TNIE reported on Nov 29, 2025

Latehar MLA Prakash Ram also highlighted the issue in the Assembly. "I had raised the issue, demanding that no construction work should be done in Netarhat as it is destroying the beauty of Queen of Hills," said the MLA.

KOLKATA DIARY

SUBHENDU MAITI
Our correspondent in West Bengal
subhendu.maiti@newindianexpress.com

B'deshi national held for murder of Hadi

West Bengal Police's Special Task Force has arrested a Bangladeshi national over the murder of Shariff Osman Hadi, a Bangladeshi political activist in Dhaka in December last year. Identified as Philip Sangma, the accused is suspected to be a key middleman who facilitated illegal border crossings. The arrest follows the interrogation of the primary suspects in the case, Faisal and Alamgir. The accused has confessed that they had illegally entered India from Bangladesh through the Meghalaya border with the help of Sangma. Bengal Police commandos conducted a raid on Saturday near the Shantipur Bypass area and took Sangma into custody.

Convocation for CU after six years' gap

After a gap of six years, Calcutta University is set to hold its convocation inside the campus on March 23. A notification issued by the university on Saturday stated that the convocation would be held at the Centenary Auditorium on the College Street campus. Last time, the convocation was held in 2020 at the Nazrul Mancha in the southern part of the city. The new governor, R N Ravi, as an ex officio chancellor of the university, will preside over the convocation programme. The convocation address will be delivered by Suman Chakraborty, Director of the IIT Kharagpur. About 1,100 research scholars, who have completed their PhD between 2024 and 2026, will be awarded a degree.'

ISI teachers demand a full-term director

Teachers of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in Kolkata have urged the ICI council to appoint a full-term director for the institute. A section of serving and retired teachers of the ISI have written to the council expressing grievances for the "inordinate and unprecedented delay" in the appointment of the full-term director. They have alleged that the appointment has been stalled at a time when the ministry of statistics and programme implementation is pursuing a unilateral overhaul of the ISI's governance structure by introducing an ISI Bill. The institute is being run under an officiating director, Ayanaendranath Basu.

3 million

have registered to vote in Congo's election that's expected to extend the president's 42-year rule

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • LS: Light Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	21	1	SNY	Los Angeles	20	12	SNY
Colombo	28	24	SNY	Melbourne	26	15	LC
Dhaka	31	19	SNY	Moscow	4	2	SNY
Dubai	26	21	SNY	New York	7	2	SNY
Houston	31	19	TDS	Singapore	28	25	TDS
Istanbul	33	21	SNY	Toronto	1	-5	SNY
London	13	9	SNY	Washington	3	-2	SNY

US-China trade dialogue resumes in Paris before Trump's trip

Engagement unfolds as the US-Israeli war with Iran disrupts energy markets, with Beijing navigating its close ties with Tehran while criticising Iranian strikes on Gulf

BEIJING

OFFICIALS from China and the United States met for trade talks in Paris on Sunday, state media said, less than three weeks before US President Donald Trump's expected summit with China's Xi Jinping.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent was meeting Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng to hash out trade issues between the world's two largest economies before Trump's expected official visit to China at the end of the month.

China's state broadcaster CCTV said the talks, which the US side said would last for two days, were being held at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

The diplomatic engagements come at a tumultuous time for the global economy, with energy markets sent spinning by the impact of the US-Israeli war with Iran.

Beijing is a close partner of Tehran and has condemned the killing of Iran's former supreme leader, but it has also criticised Iranian strikes against Gulf states. Trump, in social media posts on Saturday, called on China and other countries to send ships to the Strait of Hormuz to ensure that the vital shipping lane, through which about a fifth of world oil supplies pass, stayed open.

China's foreign ministry has not yet responded to a request for comment on Trump's request. South Korea said on Sunday it was "closely monitoring" Trump's remarks and a senior Japanese official said that Tokyo maintained a high threshold for such a move. China's commerce ministry said in a statement on Friday that officials in Paris would "conduct consultations on economic and trade issues of mutual concern", without giving further details about the content of the talks.

Bessent, who was to be accompanied by US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, said in a statement on Thursday that "economic dialogue" between the countries "is moving forward". China and the United States fought a bruising trade war for much of 2025, with reciprocal tariffs reaching triple digits at one point and export restrictions threatening to wreck global supply chains for critical minerals. Chinese exports to the United States fell 11 percent in the first two months of the year compared with the same period in 2025, data showed this week, although overall exports surged by almost 22 percent.

Tensions between the two economic titans cooled after Trump met Xi in Busan, South Korea, in October, but new US probes into Chinese industrial overcapacity and forced labour announced on Wednesday threaten more instability. The new trade investigations into excess industrial capacity target China and other key partners. China's commerce ministry criticised the probes as "a typical act of unilateralism that severely undermines the international economic and trade order".

Washington has also launched trade investigations into 60 economies — including China — to look for "failures to take action on forced labour", the US Trade Representative office said. *AFP*

UN chief calls Security Council structure ineffective

UNITED NATIONS

IN a sharp critique, UN chief Antonio Guterres said there is a need to recognise "we have a problem with the Security Council", which does not reflect the current world and is not allowed to stop conflicts because of the use of veto by its permanent members.

"I think we need to recognise that we have a problem with the Security Council. The Security Council today no longer represents the world as the world exists. It represents the world after 1945," Guterres said at a press conference in Beirut on Saturday in response to a question.

He pointed out that three permanent members of the 15-nation Council are from Europe, one from Asia, and one is the United States, while there are no permanent members from Africa or Latin America. Even from Asia, that "obviously is a continent with an enormous weight in global population and global wealth", there is just one permanent member - China.

"And so, the Council has a problem of legitimacy and a problem of efficiency because of the vetoes. And what we have witnessed is that time and time again, when we have situations of conflict and when it's necessary to stop the conflict, there is a veto that emerges, and that does not allow the Security Council to act. That, unfortunately, is something that we are witnessing time and time again, and I am not hoping that in the short term, things will change," he said.

An Israeli self-propelled howitzer artillery gun fires rounds towards southern Lebanon from a position in the upper Galilee in northern Israel near the border | AFP

The Council is made up of five veto-wielding permanent members, China, France, Russia, the UK and the US, while 10 non-permanent members are elected to serve two-year terms at the horseshoe table and do not have veto powers.

India has been at the forefront of decades-long efforts calling for reform of the Security Council, including expansion in both its permanent and non-permanent categories, saying the 15-nation Council, founded in 1945, is not fit for purpose in the 21st Century and does not reflect contemporary geopolitical realities.

India has underscored that it rightly deserves to sit as a permanent member in the Security Council. India last sat at the UN high table as a non-permanent member in 2021-22. A polarised Security Council has failed to deal with current peace and security challenges, with Council members sharply divided on conflicts such as the Ukraine war, the Israel-Hamas conflict and the latest US-Israel war against Iran. *PTI*

Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike that targeted a police vehicle in Zawaida in the central Gaza Strip | AFP

Eight cops killed in central Gaza as Israel strikes police vehicle

GAZA CITY

A hospital in Gaza said it had received the bodies of eight people killed when a police vehicle was hit by an Israeli strike in the centre of the territory on Sunday. The strike came as a Hamas delegation was due to meet with Egyptian officials in Cairo, according to a source from the Palestinian Islamist movement, and as Gaza's civil defence agency reported another four people killed in an earlier Israeli strike. When asked by AFP about both incidents, the Israeli military said it was looking into the reports.

The Al-Aqsa hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah said in a statement that "eight martyrs arrived as a result of the targeting of a police vehicle in the town of Zawaida in the central Gaza Strip".

Gaza's Hamas-run interior ministry confirmed the toll, saying all those killed were policemen, including the head of police in the central governorate, Colonel Iyad Abu Yousef.

Violence has continued in the war-shattered Palestinian territory despite a ceasefire which came into effect on October 10, with both Israel and Hamas regularly accusing the other of violations.

Earlier on Sunday, Gaza's civil defence agency — which operates as a rescue force under Hamas authority — said an Israeli strike killed four people in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the centre of the territory. In a statement, Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem condemned the bombing as "a blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement". *AFP*

UAE orders arrest of 35, including 19 Indians, over misleading war videos

DUBAI

THE UAE on Sunday ordered the arrest of 35 individuals, including 19 Indians, for publishing video clips on social media platforms that contained misleading and fabricated content amid regional tensions due to the Israel-US-Iran war. The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) official news agency Wam said the accused have been referred for an expedited trial.

The latest list has 25 individuals of various nationalities, including 17 Indians, listed under different sections, separate from the 10 people, including two Indians, who were named and ordered to be arrested on Saturday. According to a statement released by the Attorney-General Dr Hamad Saif Al Shams, the move follows rigorous monitoring of digital platforms to combat the spread of fabricated information and artificial content intended to incite public disorder and undermine general stability.

"Investigations and electronic monitoring revealed that the defendants were divided into three groups that committed various acts. These included the publication of real clips related to current events, the fabrication of clips using AI, and the promotion of a state practising acts of military aggression while glorifying its leadership and military actions," it said.

Authorities said 17 people circulated misleading missile-related footage online. Ten shared authentic clips of interceptions risking exposure of defence capabilities, while seven posted AI-generated or recycled visuals falsely claiming local attacks to incite anxiety. *PTI*

Sri Lanka rolls out QR fuel rationing to curb hoarding

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka on Sunday introduced a QR code-based fuel rationing system amid fears of supply disruptions due to the West Asia conflict. Cars are limited to 15 litres a week and buses to 60 litres. The government said the move aims to curb hoarding despite sufficient stocks for four months. Long queues were reported at pumps due to technical glitches. Colombo hopes to secure supplies from India and Russia. Similar QR rationing was used during the 2022 economic crisis when severe shortages triggered long fuel queues. Authorities have also urged people to limit non-essential travel to reduce fuel consumption.

EXPRESS READ

Taiwan reports surge in Chinese military aircraft

HONG KONG: Taiwan reported a surge in Chinese military activity after detecting 26 aircraft and seven naval ships near the island on Saturday, its defence ministry said. Sixteen aircraft entered Taiwan's central and southwestern Air Defence Identification Zone. The spike follows an unusual two-week drop in flights that puzzled analysts. Some linked the lull to China's legislative meeting or efforts to ease tensions with Washington ahead of a possible visit by US President Donald Trump. Beijing has vowed to seize Taiwan by force if necessary.

Harry, Meghan call royal book 'deranged'

LONDON: Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, criticised author Tom Bower's new book on Britain's royal family, calling it "deranged conspiracy and melodrama." In a statement on Saturday, the couple said Bower had crossed the line from criticism into obsession. Extracts published in The Times claimed Queen Camilla once told a friend Meghan had "brainwashed" Harry and that Prince William and Catherine saw her as a threat. Harry and Meghan said Bower builds theories about people he has never met.

Zelenskyy says Ukraine ready for next round of peace talks

KYIV

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in comments released on Sunday that he was ready for the next round of trilateral peace talks to end Russia's more than 4-year-old invasion of Ukraine, but that it was up to Washington and Moscow to agree on where and when to meet.

Zelenskyy said the US had proposed hosting the next meeting between American, Ukrainian and Russian negotiating teams, which include US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, but Moscow had refused to send a delegation.

"We are waiting for a response from the Americans. Either they will change the country where we meet, or the Russians must confirm the US," Zelenskyy said in a media briefing Saturday. "We are not blocking any of these initiatives. We want a trilateral meeting to take place." The US has postponed its sponsored talks between the two sides due to the war in the West Asia. *AP*

Firefighters put out the fire in a residential neighbourhood following a Russian attack, in Brovary, Ukraine | AP

Russia says 28 Ukrainian drones downed

MOSCOW: Russian air defence units destroyed 28 Ukrainian drones heading toward Moscow on Sunday, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said, marking the second consecutive day of attempted attacks on the capital. He gave no details on casualties or damage. Flights were temporarily suspended at Vnukovo and Sheremetyevo airports due to the drone threat, Russia's civil aviation agency said. On Saturday, several Moscow airports halted operations for hours as air defences shot down drones approaching the city. Russia earlier said 47 drones were destroyed near Moscow and 280 intercepted elsewhere.

NAIL-BITING

Oscars set for Anderson-Coogler face-off

LOS ANGELES

HOLLYWOOD will convene Sunday night for a nail-biter Academy Awards that's steering toward a coronation for either Paul Thomas Anderson or Ryan Coogler. Most would call that a win-win.

Anderson's "One Battle After Another" is the favorite heading into the ceremony at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. But Coogler's "Sinners" comes in the lead nominee with a record 16 nominations. Both filmmakers are poised to leave with their first Oscar.

But little else is assured at an Academy Awards where Michael B Jordan or Timothée Chalamet (despite the ballet diss heard 'round the world) could win their first Academy Award in a too-close-to-call best actor race. Conan O'Brien is returning as host for the second year in a row. Despite the war in Iran and expanding geopolitical turmoil, O'Brien has pledged an entertaining show in the mold of hosts like Bob Hope and Johnny Carson.

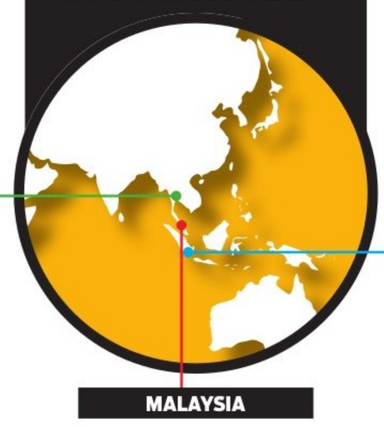
Workers erect an Oscar statue ahead of the 98th Annual Academy Awards outside the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California | AP

"Let's have fun with it, is my attitude," O'Brien told reporters earlier in the week. Still, the already high security will be even greater this year at an Oscars, taking place two weeks after the United States and President Donald Trump launched the war with Iran.

"Of course, every year we monitor what's going on in the world," Raj Kapoor, executive producer of the show, said earlier in the week. "We have the support of the FBI and the LAPD, and it's a close collaboration."

Two of the five best song nominees will be performed: "I Lied to You," from "Sinners," with Miles Caton, Raphael Saadiq and others; and "Golden" from "KPop Demon Hunters." *AP*

ASIA MATTERS



THAILAND

HEALTH AGENCY WARNS OF HEAT STROKE RISK

The Department of Disease Control has warned the public to watch for heat stroke during the hot season after 182 heat-related illnesses and 21 deaths were recorded last year. Most cases involved men and outdoor workers such as labourers and soldiers, with the highest number among people aged 15–34. Heat exhaustion was the most common condition, followed by fainting and cramps, while heat stroke accounted for 17 cases. Extreme heat, sometimes reaching 41°C, raises health risks. Vulnerable groups were urged to avoid peak heat and stay hydrated.

MALAYSIA

GAS SUPPLY STABLE, POWER SECURE: DY PM

Gas supply remains stable and sufficient to support power plants and ensure electricity security, Deputy PM Fadillah Yusof said. About 85% of households using under 600 kilowatt-hours monthly are exempt from fuel cost adjustments. Authorities said subsidies and rebates will continue while monitoring global fuel prices and regional energy market developments.

INDONESIA

JAPAN SEALS MINERALS, NUCLEAR PACT

A memorandum of cooperation was signed in Tokyo to strengthen collaboration on critical minerals and nuclear energy during the Indo-Pacific Energy Security Ministerial and Business Forum. Officials said the partnership aims to build a more integrated and sustainable energy system. Cooperation will focus on strengthening supply chains for key minerals and developing low-carbon nuclear technologies with high safety standards. The two sides will expand cooperation in LNG and coal supply chains and support energy transition projects.

3.86% year-on-year growth in India's gems and jewellery exports in February at ₹24,340 cr, following the industry's diversification into other markets, as per the GJEPC

West Asia war may pinch household budgets

Higher fuel costs, rising inflation, volatile markets, uncertainty over jobs and remittances may affect households

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

THE ongoing conflict between Iran and the United States is not just a geopolitical flashpoint—it could soon start affecting the daily finances of Indian households through higher fuel costs, rising inflation, volatile markets and uncertainty over jobs and remittances. Economists say the biggest impact will likely come from energy prices.

Fuel price rise

Crude oil prices typically rise during West Asia tensions as the region accounts for a large share of global oil supply. If tensions persist and oil prices remain elevated, Indian consumers could see higher petrol and diesel prices.

Analysts see for every $1 per barrel rise in Brent crude, retail prices may rise by ₹0.52/litre for diesel and ₹0.55/litre for petrol. Higher fuel prices will raise transportation and logistics costs, which push up prices of food and essential goods. Prices of LPG, kerosene, CNG and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) could also move higher.

Inflationary effect

Rising energy prices tend to spread across the economy. In a base case scenario, India's consumer inflation is expected at 4.1%, assuming crude oil averages about $70 per barrel and the monsoon remains normal.

If crude averages around $90/barrel, similar to the levels seen during the Russia-Ukraine War in FY23, retail fuel prices may rise by 3% even after some cost sharing between oil companies, the government and consumers. Economists see higher fuel and commodity prices adding 80 basis points to inflation, pushing retail inflation closer to 4.9% in FY27. The impact will come via second-round effects—higher transport fares, costlier air travel, taxi rides, restaurant bills and hotel tariffs.

Gold, silver may get costlier

Periods of geopolitical uncertainty drive investors toward safe-haven assets such as gold and silver. Prices of both metals are therefore expected to rise if the conflict continues.

Some estimates suggest gold and silver prices could increase by about 10%.

Weak rupee, price pressures

Another indirect impact could come through currency market. If global investors move funds to safer assets, the rupee could weaken, making imports—including crude oil—more expensive. A weaker currency adds to inflationary pressure in the economy. Overseas education and travels also become expensive

Investors at risk

Over the past two weeks, investors have lost ₹39 lakh crore in the equity market. For retail investors with exposure to equities via direct investments or mutual funds, this means short-term erosion in portfolio value and greater market volatility.

Remittances from Gulf

The war may affect Indian households dependent on remittances from Gulf countries. India receives $120 billion annually in remittances. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) accounts for 35-40% of it.

Economic growth concerns

Higher fuel prices and possible disruptions in supplies of LPG, LNG, fertilizers and petrochemicals could slow industrial activity.

IN CONVERSATION

SANJAY KULSHRESTHA
Chairman and MD, the Housing and Urban Development Corporation

'Sustainability & private participation have long contained urban growth'

THE Union Budget 2026-27 allocated a capital expenditure of ₹12.2 lakh crore for infra financing with roads, seven high-speed rail corridors, and urban development being the key focus areas. In an interaction with **TNIE**, **Sanjay Kulshrestha**, chairman and managing director (CMD) of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd. (HUDCO) talks about the challenges of infra financing and how they can be addressed. **Edited excerpts**:

Can you share your perspective on budget highlights, and specifically tell us how the new announcements align with current growth trajectory of India's urban infrastructure?
Over the past a few years, the Government of India has placed infrastructure at the core, and this Budget reinforces that focus by integrating higher reform-based capital spending, along with policy clarity across Urban Infrastructure sectors.

The 10% rise in capex to over ₹12 lakh crore underscores the Centre's push for urban development. The extension of the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT 2.0) further reinforces the commitment to universal water supply, improved sewerage networks, and sustainable urban water management.

The ₹100 crore support to catalyse ₹1,000 crore in municipal bonds strengthens ULB creditworthiness and market access, enabling cities to improve service delivery and outcomes. Stronger ULB governance further shows sound financial management and discipline are key to better infrastructure delivery and investment readiness. With the World Bank estimating an annual need of ₹5-8 lakh crore for urban infrastructure until 2036, the Budget begins bridging the gap via Urban Challenge Fund, Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF), and Infrastructure Risk Guarantee Fund (IRGF).

Urban Challenge Fund aims to unlock ₹4 lakh cr in projects, with the Centre contributing ₹1 lakh cr and states 25%. This lowers private sector's capital burden, requiring only ₹50 for every ₹100 invested, improving viability

Sustainability and private participation remain two biggest hurdles in urban story. How can we make 'green urbanisation' viable and why should private players believe that the new PPP ecosystem will be different from challenges of the past?
Sustainability and private participation have long challenged India's urban growth. For green urbanisation to be viable, projects must reduce risk and improve bankability, an area where current policy makes a clear impact.

The Urban Challenge Fund aims to unlock nearly ₹4 lakh crore in projects, with the government contributing ₹1 lakh crore and states 25%. This lowers the private sector's capital burden, potentially requiring only about ₹50 for every ₹100 invested, improving viability and reducing upfront risk. The framework addresses both asset and liability concerns that earlier slowed PPP projects, easing hesitation among developers and lenders.

In addition, a Partial Guarantee Fund protects lenders against uncontrollable risks, reducing uncertainty in long-gestation, climate-linked urban projects. Combined with momentum from initiatives like Make in India and the PLI scheme, the ecosystem is becoming more supportive of private investment.

What is most common challenge you face when you think of urban development in India that varies across states?
One of the most common challenges in urban development across states is the variation in institutional and project preparation capacity. From a HUDCO and infrastructure financing perspective, the challenge is often not the availability of fund but project feasibility report and its assessment, and limited focus on bankability, viability and sustainability of the project. This leads to execution delays, cost overruns, and contractor payment issues.

Strongly governed entities with financial discipline manage projects more efficiently, while others face higher risks and slower implementation. Strengthening project structuring, appraisal, and financial management at the ULB level is, therefore, critical for sustainable urban development.

MONEY-WISE

THE ELSS ROUTE TO TAX SAVING

FINANCIAL ADVICE
ASHOK KUMAR
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(Views expressed here are personal)

THE countdown to the financial year end is on. Typically, manytax payers still availing of the older tax regimewill nowscramble to complete their Tax saving investments. There are multiple options on offer but the sole pure equity option on offer in this category is the Equity Linked Saving Scheme (ELSS) offered by Mutual Fund houses.

The Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP) product offered by Insurance companies is another popular option, where the lock in is restricted to 5 years though ideally one should hold it for longer tenure to optimize returns. In case of ULIPs, the investor also has the advantage of two way fungiblity between Equity and Debt.

Foralmost all the remaining Tax Saving instruments, including the Tax Saving Bank Deposits, the underlying investment vehicle is debt andthe minimum lock-in period is at least 5 years,with some having even longer holding tenures. Of such investment options, the Public Provident Fund (PPF), remains the most popular tax saving debt based investment for those averse to equity. The lock-in period is 5 times longer than ELSS, though the returns unlike ELSS are still tax-free.

More often than not, when one looks at the relative 3 year performance of the ELSS as compared to its alternative tax saving instruments, it has been superior. The reason of focusing on 3 year returns here is simply because the lock-in period for ELSS is 3 years which makes it the shortest tenure tax saving instrument.

Besides its plus points of being the only tax saving instrument where the underlying asset class is equity and its being locked in for just 3 years, there is another unique feature that the ELSS offers investors.

Once the funds complete 3 years of investment, the same can be redeemed and reinvested without having to bother about a fresh infusion of funds to save taxes.Hence, the outflows can be restricted to three years and thereafter, the funds can be rolled over if needed, thus not impacting a tax payers liquidity.

This of course must be accompanied by the caveat that there is an underlying assumption of there being at least a status quo in the sum invested if not appreciation. But, like I mentioned before, historical evidence suggests that it is the case, more often than not. It must be noted though that such a fund rollover will unfortunately attract Capital Gains Tax on the profit made.

While discussing ELSS with anyone, I have often made the point that investors in ELSS would do well to consider completing it during the early part of the year so that their compounding tenure increases.Alternatively, one could plan it as an SIP and let it run on auto-pilot for at least 3 years.

Finally, one must choose their tax saving investment based on their Risk appetite. For younger investors with a taxable income and relatively higher Risk Appetite, ELSS could be an optimal option.

MONEY MATTERS

HOW 'OVERESTIMATED' GROWTH DATA HITS YOU

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE
RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

IF you belong to a middle-class family and like to keep a check on prices of your monthly groceries, you may have noted a few things. Assuming you are consuming same quantity of items, your monthly bills continue to rise. When you pick up a financial daily, you notice inflation rate in the economy is at a record low. Then you wonder about affordability and ask yourself whether you are earning enough to cover all expenses.

For the decade to 2023, the dominant narrative has been that India was an oasis of a large economy, with a growth of 6-7%. For many households, reality on the ground has felt like a "puzzle". Those in white-collar jobs wondered about lack of opportunities in an otherwise booming economy.

A new paper co-authored by former economic advisor Arvind Subramanian suggests the answer is simple: growth was not as strong as reported. Their research indicates since 2011 India's true annual growth has likely been between 4% and 4.4%, a major drop from the official 5.9%. While a 1.5-2% difference might sound like a rounding error to a statistician, in the world of personal finance, it changes how you should manage your money.

Your income and slowdown

The report shows your ability to buy goods and services was overstated by up to 31%. That explains your frustration that your employer did not pay you a higher wage despite a visible rise in day-to-day expenses. Businesses saw wholesale prices for inputs decline, but didn't pass along those lower costs to customers, employees, or vendors. The visible urban slowdown reported by consumer firms in their analyst conference calls after financial results is better explained as a result. While you relied on personal loans to own a new home, a car, or for travel expenses, businesses used that wholesale cost savings to borrow less money from banks. That led to a surge in personal loans and a slow pace of credit uptake in corporate sector. The government did the bulk of its spending via capital expenditure. Credit growth slows when businesses have overcapacity and don't see a major pick-up in consumption. That leads to a slowdown in new hiring. With a near 7% average economic growth, companies should have fought hard for talent. The analysis finds the bank credit growth for expansion slowed to 5.6% from 15.6% since 2012. Industrial production fell to 2.9% from 16.1%, as corporate sales growth remained low. That shows tepid salary growth and a feeling of stagnating income.

Investment overvaluation

Asset prices reflect future growth. If investors had assumed a GDP growth rate of 7% and the reality was 4.5%, they have overpaid for assets since 2012. When growth is faster, demand for middle-class homes surges. However, the only segment to report faster growth was luxury homes segment. Indian equities remain costly against other emerging markets. The sell-off due to the crisis in West Asia has shaved off trillions of dollars from asset prices. Since that has happened across the board, Indian assets continue to look expensive relative to them.

What could you do now

Data is a double-edged sword. An overestimation of growth would lead to an overcorrection in asset prices. You may want to be ready for that situation. A logical step is to ensure that your portfolio's average returns are not 12-15% annually, as assumed in the faster-growth-rate scenario. They could trend down, which means you need to keep a solid emergency fund. You may want to hold more cash and minimise investment risk. The higher liquidity could give you a chance to buy quality equity assets or property when there are situations of a sharp sell-off for reasons not related to domestic fundamentals.

upGrad to buy Unacademy; Gaurav Munjal to remain CEO

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

EDTECH major upGrad has signed a term sheet to acquire rival Unacademy in an all-stock transaction, a move that could mark one of the biggest consolidation plays in India's online education sector.

Under the proposed deal, Unacademy's co-founder and CEO Gaurav Munjal will continue to lead the company and focus on building online education products for learners in India and globally, Ronnie Screwvala, co-founder and chairman of upGrad, said on Sunday.

The transaction will be executed as a 100% share swap, though both companies said the valuation will not be disclosed until the deal closes and the transaction documents are formally filed. The companies have also agreed on a break fee in case the deal does not go through.

Munjal said the past year has been a period of restructuring and refocusing for Unacademy. The company consolidated its company-operated offline centres with franchise partners to focus more on its core strength of building online education products. It also completed a Rs 50 crore employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) buyback, with nearly 40% of former employees participating.

He added that Airlearn—the company's first global product—is seeing meaningful traction in markets such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Canada. According to Munjal, Unacademy currently has cash reserves of more than $100 million.

"I will be staying back as co-founder and CEO of Unacademy with the goal of building great online products for learners in India and globally," Munjal said.

Agentic AI to generate more tech jobs: Survey

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

TECHNOLOGY leaders at banks across Asia Pacific expect agentic artificial intelligence to gerenare more tech roles rather than replace them, as per a new survey by Accenture.

The Banking IT Executives Survey found 74% of banks in the region expect to increase their technology headcount due to agentic AI, while 4% see reducing staff. Instead of replacing employees, banks are reshaping roles to work alongside AI. Over half (58%) of banks are creating hybrid positions that combine traditional technology responsibilities with AI oversight. About 30% plan to reskill or redeploy technology staff so they can manage or collaborate with AI-driven processes.

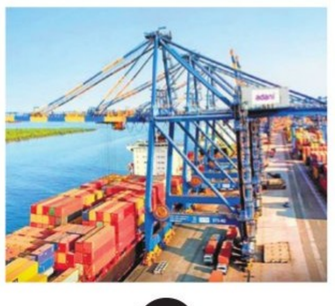
Malaysia exits US reciprocal trade tariff agreement after Supreme Court ruling

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

MALAYSIA has withdrawn from a trade agreement with the United States, becoming the first country to abandon a pact negotiated under Washington's reciprocal tariff strategy after a court ruling removed the legal basis for the policy.

On March 15, Malaysia's Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry Johari Abdul Ghani announced that the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between the two countries was now "null and void".

The decision follows a February 20 ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States that struck down reciprocal tariffs imposed by the administration of Donald Trump under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.



It (US reciprocal trade tariff) is not on hold. It is no longer there, it is null and void

Johari Abdul Ghani, Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Malaysia

The court held that the president lacked authority under that law to impose sweeping tariffs, effectively removing the legal foundation of the bilateral agreement.

"It is not on hold. It is no longer there, it's null and void," Johari said, adding that Washington could instead rely on other trade tools such as tariffs under Section 122 or investigations under Section 301.

The agreement had been signed on October 26, 2025 in Kuala Lumpur by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Trump. At the time, then trade minister Tengku Zafrul Aziz led negotiations for Malaysia. Under the deal, Malaysia avoided steep tariffs that had initially reached 47%, securing reductions first to 24% and later to about 19%. In return, Kuala Lumpur agreed to provide deeper market access and policy concessions to the United States.

Medvedev hands Alcaraz his first loss of the year

Daniil Medvedev handed top-seeded Carlos Alcaraz his first loss of the year and advanced to the final at Indian Wells with a 6-3, 7-6 (3) victory. The 11th-seeded Russian will face second-seeded Jannik Sinner of Italy. Sinner beat Alexander Zverev 6-2, 6-4. Alcaraz had won 16 straight matches this year, including titles at the Australian Open.

UNCAPPED ONES TO WATCH FOR

WITH THE 2026 IPL SEASON IS COMING UP, A LOOK AT SOME OF THE UNCAPPED INDIAN DOMESTIC TALENTS TO KEEP AN EYE ON OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS....

Auqib Nabi

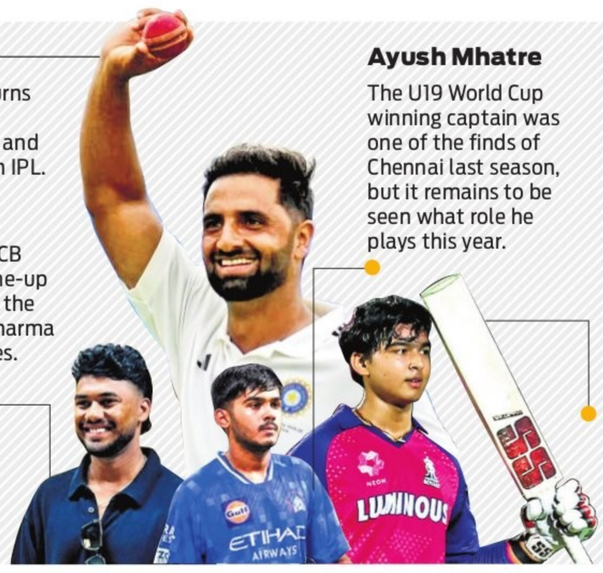
All eyes will be on Nabi when he turns up for Delhi Capitals. The seamer helped J&K win the first Ranji title and now will be keen to make a mark in IPL.

Vihaan Malhotra

An U19 WC star who will be with RCB this season. They have a settled line-up but as and when he gets a chance, the 19-year-old could support Jitesh Sharma and Rajat Patidar in finishing duties.

Kartik Sharma

The 19-year-old, who was signed by CSK, is already catching the attention during the pre-season camp. He could add the much-needed support and firepower.



Ayush Mhatre

The U19 World Cup winning captain was one of the finds of Chennai last season, but it remains to be seen what role he plays this year.

Priyansh Arya

He too is already a known name. But this season will be about making a mark big time to ensure he throws his name in the ring for selections. A title-winning season with PBKS could change things for him.

Sahil Parakh

He was not a part of the U19 World Cup but the Maharashtra teenager will feel at home in DC. He usually bats in the top three and may struggle to find a place in first XI.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

If he caught the attention in 2025, Vaibhav could become bigger this season. Another dominant season could elevate him up the ranks in terms of making the cut to T20I side.

IPL: TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

Two matches in Guwahati closer to voting day but Assam Cricket Association is confident of smooth conduct

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

THE BCCI on March 11 had announced the schedule for the first phase of the 2026 IPL. "As three states are scheduled to undergo State Assembly elections during this period, the full schedule of the tournament will be announced once the poll dates are announced," it had said in a statement.

Even as five states are scheduled to go to polls, the Indian cricket board was waiting for election schedules of West Bengal, Assam and Tamil Nadu where IPL matches will be held during the 19th season commencing on March 28. With the Election Commission of India (ECI) announcing the poll and result dates on Sunday, the first phase of league can proceed unhindered except for a couple of matches scheduled in Guwahati, Assam.

The Barsapara Cricket Stadium in Guwahati, second home for Rajasthan Royals, will host three games in the first phase — March 30 between RR and Chennai Super Kings, April 7 between RR and Mumbai Indians and April 10 between RR and Royal Challengers Bengaluru. The last two matches might create a few issues due to their proximity with the polling date. As per the ECI's poll schedule, Assam will vote in one phase on April 9.

Assam Cricket Association (ACA), however, looked confident of hosting these matches amid polls. "Matches will happen as scheduled. We are preparing accordingly," an ACA official told this daily. On being further questioned about law and order situation and security issues if the two events — polls and matches — organised close to each other, the official said, "That's what we are precisely preparing with support from concerned (authorities). As of today, we are preparing as scheduled."

Matches in Guwahati

- **March 30:** RR vs CK
- **April 7:** RR vs MI
- **April 10:** RR vs RCB

Note: Polling in Assam will be held on April 9

Like Assam, Kerala and Puducherry will head to the polls on April 9 in a single phase voting, meanwhile, Tamil Nadu will go to vote on April 23. West Bengal elections will be held in two phases — April 23 and 29. The counting of votes for all these states will be done on May 4. But the remaining two centres — Kolkata and Chennai — are likely to remain unaffected as there is considerable gap between the matches and polling dates. The MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai will host two matches — CSK vs Punjab Kings on April 3 and CSK vs Delhi Capitals on April 11. Eden Gardens in Kolkata will be the venue for three matches in the first phase. The home team, Kolkata Knight Riders, will host Sunrisers Hyderabad, Punjab Kings and Lucknow Super Giants on April 2, 6 and 9, respectively.

A total of 20 matches are scheduled to be played across 10 venues — Bengaluru, Mumbai, Guwahati, New Chandigarh, Lucknow, Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad — during the first phase.

Even the matches at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru including the opener between defending champions RCB and SRH are subject to clearance from the expert committee constituted by the Karnataka government. The committee had already inspected the venue on March 13 and expected to come out with its decision on Monday.

Boxer Chandrika inspiring slum kids

ANMOL GURUNG @ Chennai

CHANDRIKA Pujari is carving an inspiring path for herself. Hailing from Tadiwala Road slums in Pune, the 17-year-old has been defying odds to highlight her aptitude for boxing at the international stage. On Sunday, the 17-year-old captured a gold medal in the World Boxing Futures Cup 2026 in Bangkok, a tournament which is part of the pathway to the Youth Olympic Games that will be held in Dakar later this year.

Given the disadvantages she faced, it's a monumental result for Chandrika, who has been taking steps in the right direction ever since she took up the gloves at Yuva Boxing Club, an organisation that has been instrumental in her promising growth as a boxer. "She was just 10 or 11 when she joined our club. She is from the slum region. Her parents are originally from Karnataka but Chandrika and her father were born here. Her grandfather is from Karnataka. Her father works as a helper in a private company and her mother goes house to house to do cleaning jobs. She is doing great and has been inspiring many from the region to take up sports," Sachin Shinde, the person who took up the initiative to form the club, said.

Sachin, who's passionate about sports, said they started sporting activities (football and boxing) in 2017 in order to give children from slums proper direction in life. There are a few more from the club who have been gradually displaying their promise at the domestic circuit. "Children from slum regions tend to get into bad habits. They either start doing drugs or get into fights. So in order to divert the mind, we opened the club. We get some donations for Dr Ambedkar Jayanti every year. With that money, we pay fees to the coaches. And we spend the rest of the money for their education and sports," Sachin revealed.

Their honest intent is paying off. Chandrika, who competes in the 51kg category, is now dreaming of taking part in the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). Besides her, four more — three silver and one bronze — youth boxers from India medalled in Bangkok. The medallists, especially Chandrika, could be part of the YOG, depending on what the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decides. But it's still highly unclear at the moment. The IOC will finalise the weight categories, the number of entries (men and women) based on YOG sports programme. Sachin hopes she can be part of not just the Youth Olympics but the senior Olympics as well. "After she won the Asian Youth Games, at least 20 to 25 kids joined our club. Parents got more awareness after her feat was published by the local media. Her coaches in the national team, we just have hopes that she'll be part of YOG. Eventually, we hope that she can also be part of the senior Olympics one day."

At the Yuva Boxing Club, she was training under Jayant Shinde. Jayant, a former boxer, is visibly stoked to witness her ward make notable strides so far. Her latest gold is not something out of the blue. In 2025, she had captured gold during Asian Youth Games (54kg) and had gone on to repeat the feat towards the end of the year during the Asian Championship.

She is on the path for big things at the moment but Jayant remembers the challenges they faced when she was just learning the basics. "She comes from a poor family. I also come from a humble background and whatever we do, we do for kids from humble backgrounds. The training is free of cost."

Her talent was undeniable in the eyes of the coach. It was Jayant who laid the foundation before helping her explore a new chapter. "Our training facilities are basic. We don't have much space. We don't have equipment. She was with me for two years or so. After that, I suggested she train elsewhere. Nor did I have a good state at home nor did she. I wanted her to train at a place with better facilities, an idea which was initially turned down by her family members. She started crying after that, then I took her away quietly and admitted her to SAI, Goa. She started producing results and then her family members were also happy," Jayant said.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Boxer Chandrika Pujari (L) with coach Jayant Shinde | **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

EXPRESS READ

West Indies players reached home: CWI

NEW DELHI: West Indies players and support staff have safely returned home after being left stranded in India following the T20 World Cup due to travel disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict, Cricket West Indies (CWI) said. The ongoing war between US-Israel and Iran threw travel plans into disarray, leaving West Indies and South African teams stranded in Kolkata due to closure of air space and airports at major transit points like Dubai. The Windies played their final WC match in Kolkata on March 1.

South Africa win first T20I vs New Zealand

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: A South Africa team with four players on debut rolled T20 WC finalist New Zealand for 91 in 14.3 overs and went on to win the first T20I on Sunday by seven wickets. Opener Connor Esterhuizen anchored the South Africa reply with an unbeaten 45 from 48 balls as the Proteas won with 20 balls to spare. He finished the chase with a six off Kyle Jamieson from the fourth ball of the 17th over. **Brief scores:** NZ 91 in 14.3 ovs (Neesham 26; Mokoena 3/26) lost to SA 93/3 in 16.4 ovs (Esterhuizen 45 n.o; Santner 1/8).

Argentina vs Spain tie in Qatar called off

NYON: UEFA on Sunday said that the game between Argentina and Spain known as Finalissima that was supposed to be held in Qatar has been cancelled after the widening Middle East war. The game between South American champion Argentina and European champion Spain was scheduled to be held in Doha on March 27. It was going to be a marquee matchup between the teams led by Lionel Messi and Lamine Yamal. But the security of the game was put into serious doubt when Iran intensified its attacks on neighboring nations.

NEUFC grab first win, Kashi lose at home

GUWAHATI: Two second-half goals from Andy Rodríguez powered NorthEast United FC to a 2-1 victory over Jamshedpur FC in the Indian Super League at Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium on Sunday. The Highlanders secured their first victory of the campaign and moved up to seventh in the standings with six points. Meanwhile, Mumbai City FC held off a spirited Inter Kashi fightback to register a 2-1 victory at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata.

It feels right: Dravid on India's rise

ENS/AGENCIES

FORMER India captain and head coach Rahul Dravid on Sunday said the country's rich cricketing potential is now translating into tangible success, with a string of victories in global tournaments reflecting the talent long present in Indian cricket.

Dravid, honoured with the Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award during the BCCI's annual awards function, told the broadcaster, "It just kind of feels right, right?"

India have been on a winning spree in ICC events winning each of the last two men's T20 World Cups, women's ODI World Cup, men's U-19 World Cup as well as the women's U-19 T20 World Cup over the last two years. "Almost everything coming together at this point of time where Indian cricket has always had great potential and it's (about) realising that potential on the field as well. Off the field, I think we've always had everything we needed and on the field, it's been great to see that potential being realised." Dravid said the success is due to various factors, from players to administrators and fans, coming together.

"It's been phenomenal. It's just been amazing to see the way Indian cricket has grown over these three decades," he said reflecting from the time he made his debut in 1996. "Indian cricket has always had amazing talent. We've always had really good administrators. We've always had really good coaches (and) we've been able to back that up with incredible infrastructure. We've always had a fantastic domestic system, (a) very good junior cricket system." ". and some of the most incredible fans in the world. The kind of supporters and fans that we have, deserved all of this to come together, to have success on the field. It's amazing to see how that all of that is coming together now."

Dravid, who coached India to the T20 World Cup win in 2024, credited the current side for living up to the expectations. "It was just lovely to see... Just the performance of the world T20 side, the expectations were immense. They started off as favourites, and it's not always easy," Dravid said.

"Yes, of course, they're a very good side, but it's not always easy to start off as favourites and be there right at the end and lift a trophy. It comes with its own pressures, its own challenges. It was just really good to see Surya (Suryakumar Yadav) and Gautam (Gambhir) and the team really do that," he said.

(From left to right) The men's T20 World Cup-winning team and support staff pose for a picture. Jemimah Rodrigues (L), Arundhati Reddy and Smriti Mandhana (R) arrive for the BCCI annual awards in New Delhi on Sunday | **PTI**

'Must prepare for future Oly cycle': ICC chair Shah

ENS @ New Delhi

CALLING for long-term planning for India's sporting future, ICC Chairman Jay Shah on Sunday urged stakeholders to begin preparing for the 2030–2036 global sporting cycle, emphasising the importance of coordinated efforts across federations, corporates, athletes and the media.Shah was speaking at the Grand Sports Conclave on Day 3 of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) National Convention. The Conclave was hosted by the Delhi Sports Journalist Association (DSJA).

"While we focus on present competitions, we must also prepare for the future cycle — the 2030 Commonwealth Games, the 2032 Brisbane Olympics and the 2036 Olympics. Planning for these events has to begin well in advance if India wants to strengthen its global sporting footprint," Shah said.

Antonelli wins first GP in China

AGENCIES @ Shanghai

AN emotional Kimi Antonelli won a grand prix for the first time on Sunday in China ahead of Mercedes teammate George Russell and Lewis Hamilton, who made his maiden podium for Ferrari.

The 19-year-old Antonelli converted being the youngest pole-sitter in Formula One history into victory after both McLarens dramatically failed to start the Shanghai race. Charles Leclerc was fourth in the second Ferrari."I'm speechless, I'm about to cry to be honest," said Antonelli as he choked back tears.

It was an almost flawless drive from the youngster, apart from one heart-fluttering moment when he locked up at the hairpin on his penultimate lap.But he recovered to avoid nothing more damaging than a small excursion off track.

"I really wanted to bring Italy back to the top and we did today. Even if I gave myself a little bit of a heart attack towards the end a flat spot," Antonelli added.

Bahrain and Saudi GP cancelled

Formula 1 and its governing body FIA said the Grand Prix races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia will not happen in April because of safety concerns related to the US-Israel Iran war. Both countries have been struck in the war.

Gulveer breaks half marathon NR in NYC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

INDIA'S long distance runner, Gulveer Singh, bettered the national men's half marathon (21km) record on Sunday. The 27-year-old army runner clocked 59 minutes and 42 seconds to finish third at the New York City Half Marathon. Adriaan Wildschutt of South Africa was first with a time of 59:30. The previous national record of 1:00:30 was set by Avinash Sable, in 2020 at Delhi Half Marathon.

Jumper Mubassina wins gold

BENGALURU: Rising female long jumper Mubassina Mohammed (6.38m) won the long jump gold at the Fifth Indian Open Jumps Competition held at the Anju Bobby George Foundation Campus on Sunday. The 20-year-old representing the Anju Bobby George Sports Foundation also improved her personal best of 6.36m. **Select results (Winners only)** Men's long jump: Purushotham (Karnataka) 7.87m; women's triple jump: Mallala Anusha (Andhra Pradesh) 13.18m; women's long jump: Mubassina Mohammed (Anju Bobby Sports Foundation) 6.38m; Women's pole vault: Baranica Elangovan (Tamil Nadu) 4.10m.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Richarlison scores to save Spurs from brink of another defeat

Tottenham's Richarlison (C) celebrates his goal against Liverpool on Sunday | **AP**

AGENCIES @ London

SPURS forward Richarlison scored to deny Liverpool a win and provide a rather deflated away end at Anfield a pleasant surprise, as they walk away with a point in the Premier League on Sunday. The former Everton man had fed on a pass off Randal Kolo Muani, whose battle with Liverpool fullback Andrew Robertson over an airball succeeded. Earlier, Liverpool's Dominik Szoboszlai scored a wonderful freekick in the 18th minute, although that could have saved by out-of-form Tottenham keeper Guglielmo Vicario.

Meanwhile, Manchester United bolstered their bid to qualify for the Champions League with a vital 3-1 win against top-four rivals Aston Villa. Michael Carrick's side took the lead through Casemiro's second-half opener at Old Trafford before Ross Barkley hauled Villa level.

United finished strongly, with Matheus Cunha and Benjamin Sesko scoring in the closing stages to seal Carrick's seventh win in nine games since taking over as interim boss. **Results:** Man Utd 3-1 Villa, Forest 0-0 Fulham; **(Saturday)** Arsenal 2-0 Everton; West Ham 1-1 Man City.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
BENGALURU, MONDAY
16.03.2026

EDUCATION EXPRESS
edex YOUR LIFE COACH

UPCOMING EXAMINATIONS

AIIMS NORCET 10	MPPSC AE	TN SSLC
Dates: March 16, 2026	Date: March 22, 2026	Date: March 16, 2026

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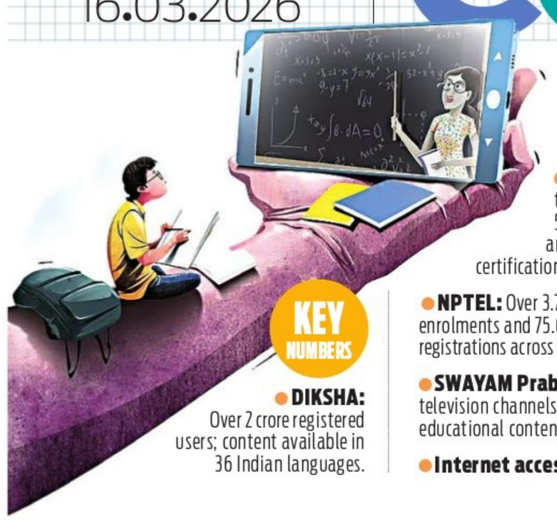


KEY NUMBERS

- **DIKSHA:** Over 2 crore registered users; content available in 36 Indian languages.
- **SWAYAM:** More than 4,400 courses, 5.8 crore enrolments, and 52.8 lakh certifications awarded.
- **NPTEL:** Over 3.79 crore course enrolments and 75.6 lakh exam registrations across 3,200+ courses.
- **SWAYAM Prabha:** 48 DTH television channels broadcasting educational content around the clock.
- **Internet access:** India had about 886 million active internet users in 2024.
- **Internet penetration:** 116 connections per 100 people in urban area versus 47.6 in rural areas.
- **Household connectivity:** 86.3% of households have internet access, and 85.5% have at least one smartphone.
- **Computer ownership:** Only 9.9% of households possess a computer, highlighting the mobile-first nature of digital learning.

EDTECH PLATFORMS RISE, BUT STUDENT ACCESS STAYS LOW

YECHURI SASHIKANTH

INDIA'S push toward digital education accelerated during the pandemic, when schools and colleges turned to remote learning to maintain academic continuity. In the years since, the country has built a large digital education infrastructure through national platforms, television channels, and online course networks intended to reach students across school and higher education. The expansion of this infrastructure has been rapid, with millions of learners enrolling in online courses and thousands of digital learning modules now available across disciplines.

Yet the presence of platforms alone does not determine how widely digital learning is used. Internet connectivity, device access, and language availability remain critical factors shaping who can actually benefit from these resources.

Access conditions vary widely across the country. Smartphones and internet connections are now present in a majority of households, but computers remain far less common. Many students rely on shared devices or mobile phones to access lessons and study material, which can limit how easily they participate in digital learning activities.

Teacher preparedness is another factor influencing how widely digital tools are adopted in practice. Training programmes aimed at strengthening educators' digital skills have expanded in recent years, reflecting the broader shift toward technology-supported learning environments across schools and colleges.

PAID & PLAYED

A quick guide to what students and parents should do when an educational purchase goes wrong

SOHAM MITRA

STUDENTS and parents routinely spend on textbooks, uniforms, digital learning subscriptions, coaching classes, and exam-preparation services. Sometimes these purchases do not go as expected. A course may fail to match what was promised, a subscription may continue after cancellation, or unexpected charges may appear on a platform. When such things happen, the following steps may help.

1 Identify the problem and collect proof

Determine what went wrong, whether it involves misleading claims, billing errors, faulty materials, or failure of service. Gather records that support your case: the invoice or receipt and any emails or messages linked to the purchase. These create a paper trail that helps establish the transaction, identify the product or service involved, and show what was promised.

2 Contact the seller or service provider

NATIONAL CONSUMER HELPLINE
1915
Helpline
consumerhelpline.gov.in

Important! Complaints should be filed within two years from the date of the dispute.

Most retailers, coaching institutes, and online learning platforms maintain customer-support channels or grievance systems. File a complaint directly with the provider first. Share order numbers, invoices, screenshots, or photographs so the issue is recorded clearly. Many disputes are resolved at this stage through replacements, corrections, cancellations, or refunds.

3 Escalate through consumer grievance channel

If the seller does not respond, the complaint can be taken to formal consumer grievance systems. The National Consumer Helpline acts as a pre-litigation platform where disputes can be registered and tracked. If mediation fails, the case may be filed before the appropriate consumer commission based on the claim value. Cases involving claims up to ₹50 lakh go to the District Commission, those between ₹50 lakh and ₹2 crore go to the State Commission, and those above ₹2 crore fall under the jurisdiction of the National Commission.

Platforms are able to predict what users might buy. By analysing browsing patterns, search histories, and previous purchases, systems can anticipate interest and place offers accordingly. This is being seen as a broader change in how digital markets operate

BUY real talk Design

NIKHIL ABHISHEK

IN the digital marketplace, the design of a platform determines purchasing behaviour as much as the product itself. Many online purchases no longer occur as a single, deliberate decision. They emerge, instead, through a sequence of on-screen cues — prompts, default selections, countdown timers, and renewal reminders — that influence how users move through the buying process. Look hard enough and these cues appear across services used daily, including learning apps, streaming services, gaming platforms, e-commerce marketplaces, and ticketing portals. In some, premium options are visually emphasised while basic choices are less prominent. In others, timers accompany discounts. Trial subscriptions convert into paid plans unless cancelled. Individually, these features can appear mundane, even harmless. Taken together, however, they illustrate how the interface itself can influence a purchase.

Researchers and regulators describe these choices as dark patterns. The term refers to design practices that steer behaviour by making certain options easier to select or more visible than others. Although users technically retain the ability to choose differently, the structure of the interface consistently nudges them toward the outcome the platform prefers.

According to psychologist Aarti C Rajaratnam, these tactics work because the digital environments are exploiting basic cognitive shortcuts in how people process information. She says, "It is practically impossible for anyone to process every cue that reaches the senses. We automatically respond to certain signals more strongly than others, and many of these responses are rooted in cognitive biases that shape how we evaluate risk, opportunity, and belonging."

RECOGNISED DARK PATTERN TYPES

India's consumer protection authorities have formally identified several categories of manipulative interface practices used in digital commerce. These classifications appear in the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023, issued under the Consumer Protection Act.

1. **False urgency:** Artificial time pressure created through countdown timers or limited-availability claims
2. **Basket sneaking:** Extra products or services added to the shopping cart without clear user consent
3. **Confirm shaming:** Language that pressures users into accepting an offer by framing refusal negatively
4. **Forced action:** Requiring users to sign up or purchase something to access a service or feature
5. **Subscription trap:** Free trials that automatically convert into paid subscriptions after a set period
6. **Drip pricing:** Additional charges revealed late in the checkout process after the initial price
7. **Interface interference:** Design elements that make certain options harder to notice or select
8. **Disguised advertisement:** Advertising presented as independent content or neutral recommendations

The definition of the product itself has become far more diffused now. Earlier, people knew exactly what they were buying, whether it was poplin or polyester. People were more aware of consequences. Today, many people only recognise the brand and the price, not the product.

Dr Aarti C Rajaratnam, Psychologist and Author

Urgency cues are among the most powerful. Messages suggesting limited availability, such as countdown timers or "few seats left" prompts, tap into a deep fear of exclusion. From an evolutionary perspective, being left out of a group historically carried serious consequences, and that instinct continues to influence modern decision-making. "Human beings do not like to be excluded. When a message suggests you may miss out or be left out, it can trigger a painful sense of exclusion, pushing people to respond quickly before they fully think it through," she explains.

Other design choices rely less on urgency and more on convenience. Preselected add-ons, automatic renewals, and default settings often remain unchanged simply because users want to complete the task quickly. Rajaratnam says many digital purchases occur while people are distracted, bored, or multitasking, which are conditions that encourage rapid decisions. She notes, "If an option is already selected, many people simply accept it and move on. The thinking becomes: let me just finish this and get it over with."

Platforms are also increasingly able to predict what users might buy. By analysing browsing patterns, search histories, and previous purchases, systems can anticipate interest and position offers accordingly. Rajaratnam describes this as a broader change in how digital markets operate. "When a platform has already observed your behaviour repeatedly, it can predict what you want with surprising accuracy. At that point, influencing the next decision becomes much easier," she warns.

Free Digital Learning Tools Students Can Use

RAUNAQ BAJAJ

DIGITAL learning has produced a wide range of free resources that students can use alongside formal schooling. Government platforms, university-led initiatives, and open online services now provide access to lectures, textbooks, mock tests, and skill-based courses without subscription fees. These resources cover multiple needs, like school learning, entrance preparation, higher-level academic courses, and practical skills.

Many of these services combine video lessons, question banks, and structured modules that help students revise concepts, practise exam questions, or learn independently. Public initiatives have widened access further by making curriculum-linked content available through websites, mobile apps, television channels, and downloadable material.

Among school-learning resources, DIKSHA serves as the government's main digital platform providing curriculum-linked textbooks, explanatory videos, and teacher resources aligned with national and state syllabi through its website and app. PM eVidya broadens this access through a multi-platform approach that delivers digital lessons via online portals, mobile apps, and dedicated television channels under the SWAYAM Prabha network, allowing students to follow lessons even without constant internet connectivity.

For entrance preparation, the National Testing Agency runs the National Test Abhyas platform, which offers free mock tests for major engineering and medical entrance examinations through the NTA Abhyas app. It also provides sample papers and question banks for several national-level entrance exams on its official practice portals.

Students seeking full courses and lecture-based learning can turn to SWAYAM, a government-supported platform that hosts free online courses spanning school-level subjects to postgraduate disciplines across multiple fields of study. The National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), led by IITs and the Indian Institute of Science, offers extensive lecture series and structured courses in engineering, science, and humanities through its website and YouTube channel.

For skill development, platforms such as Code.org introduce coding and computer science through interactive tutorials and guided exercises designed for beginners, while Duolingo offers structured, gamified language lessons across multiple languages through its web and mobile platforms.

Screen vs Classroom

ARYA VIDYA

ONLINE learning tools are now embedded across the education system, from school classrooms to postgraduate courses. Recorded lectures, digital assignments, and live online classes and sessions increasingly sit alongside traditional teaching. Students and educators who experience both modes often develop strong views about what each does well, and where each falls short. Their experiences also reflect how learning habits are evolving as technology becomes part of everyday academic life.

Arya M, a third-year BTech student in Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, says the contrast is visible in attention levels and classroom behaviour. "I find students, including myself, are usually less attentive in online classes than in offline ones," she says, noting that virtual settings can also encourage dependence on AI tools such as ChatGPT instead of actively learning the material. In her view, physical classrooms are more interactive, while online learning offers flexible time management, faster syllabus coverage, and familiarity with new technologies.

Perspectives from a postgraduate student and a teacher reveal how virtual instruction and physical classrooms influence engagement, participation, and ways academic understanding develops today

Anjali CH, an MSc Human Genetics postgraduate, noticed a similar difference while preparing for German proficiency and IELTS at the same institute. "Because of a time clash, I attended German classes offline and IELTS classes online, which helped me see the differences clearly," she says. For her, offline classes were more interactive and better for concentration, especially in language learning, where speaking practice matters. They also made it easier to build connections with teachers and classmates. Online classes, she says, were flexible and convenient, but interaction felt more limited.

Shaija Unni, an educator with 19 years of classroom teaching experience who now teaches competitive exam students online, says the two formats serve different purposes. "Teaching in both offline and online environments has shown me that each has its own strengths and challenges," she says. In physical classrooms, she finds it easier to read engagement levels and build relationships through direct interaction. Online teaching, however, offers flexibility and makes presentations, quizzes, and discussion forums easier to use. She has also found that some students who are shy in classrooms participate more comfortably through chat and online discussions.

Taken together, these views suggest that the divide between online and offline learning is not a simple one. Offline settings still appear to hold an edge in concentration, interaction, and speaking practice, while online formats offer convenience, flexibility, and access to digital tools today.

STUDENT RIGHTS

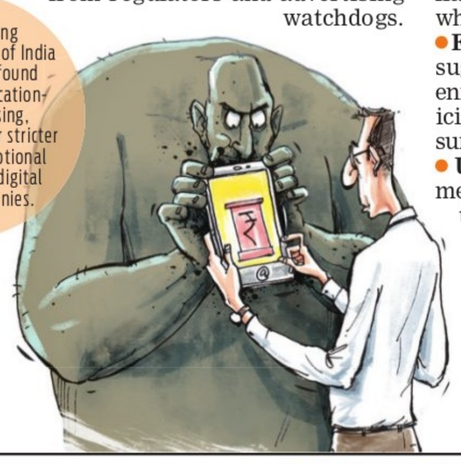
Digital education falls under consumer protection law

KARTHIKEYA S

WHEN students pay for an online course, exam-preparation subscription, or digital learning service, the transaction is legally treated like any other consumer purchase. Edtech platforms therefore fall under India's consumer protection framework, which requires companies to provide transparent pricing, truthful advertising, and fair service terms.

The Advertising Standards Council of India has repeatedly found violations in education-sector advertising, prompting calls for stricter scrutiny of promotional claims made by digital learning companies.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 applies to digital services, including online learning platforms. In addition, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued guidelines aimed specifically at regulating advertising and unfair practices in the edtech sector. Together, these rules require companies to clearly disclose course details, avoid exaggerated promises, and ensure that students and parents are not misled while enrolling in paid programmes.



EdTech marketing claims under scrutiny

Promotional messaging in the edtech sector has repeatedly drawn attention from regulators and advertising watchdogs. Authorities have warned companies against making exaggerated claims about academic outcomes or career prospects that cannot be substantiated.

- **Performance guarantees:** Ads promising that a platform will turn a student into a "topper" or dramatically improve results have been flagged by regulators as misleading when they lack evidence.
- **Fear-based marketing:** Campaigns suggesting that children who do not enrol will "fall behind" have been criticised for creating unnecessary pressure on parents and students.
- **Unverified teacher claims:** Statements about "top faculty" or exceptional teaching credentials must be backed by verifiable information.
- **Unrealistic career outcomes:** The Union Government has directed several edtech companies to withdraw advertisements suggesting that short coding or skill courses can directly lead to high-paying jobs.

LEARNING TRANSPARENCY

RIGHT	WHAT IT MEANS FOR STUDENTS
Transparent pricing	Platforms must clearly disclose full course fees and any additional charges before enrolment
Truthful advertising	Claims about placements, salaries, or guaranteed results must be accurate and verifiable
Clear cancellation terms	Refund and cancellation policies must be stated clearly before purchase
Responsible sales practices	Companies should not pressure users into enrolling in courses or financing programmes
Data protection	Personal data collected by learning platforms must be used only with consent & proper disclosure

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16.03.2026
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

100 Centuries!

On this day, in 2012, Sachin Tendulkar became the first batter to make 100 international centuries, while playing for the Asia Cup against Bangladesh

RECORD

The then 38-year-old cemented his place as one of the greatest when he stroked a single off left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan to reach the landmark

ODI RETIREMENT

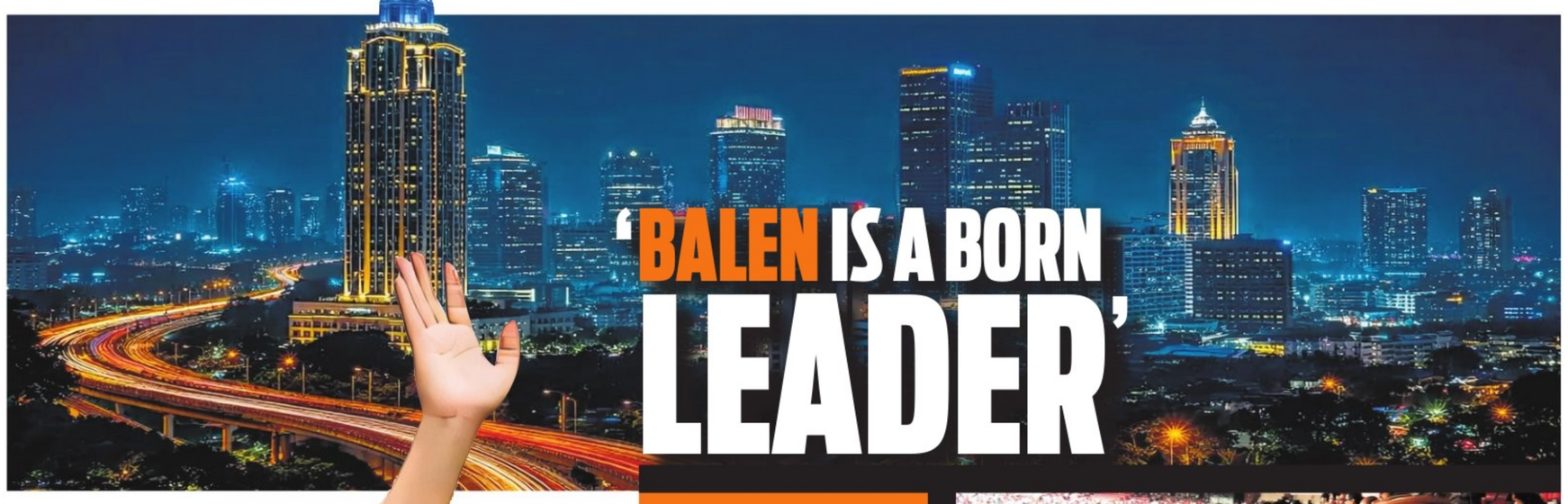
At the end of 2012, Tendulkar announced his retirement from One Day International games with an aim to prolong his Test career

FAREWELL

In 2013, he retired from all forms of cricket post the home Test series against West Indies in front of an emotional home crowd at Wankhede Stadium

What's happening in ooru?

PG 2



'BALEN IS A BORN LEADER'

As rapper Balendra Shah, aka Balen, prepares for a larger political role, his close family members in B'luru offer a glimpse into the journey behind the PM- designate of Nepal

ANJALI RAM

Long before politics placed him into the national spotlight in Nepal, **Balendra Shah** was a student figuring out life amidst the college corridors in Bengaluru. A significant chapter of his journey unfolded in the city, says his elder sister Sujata Sah Sejekan and brother-in-law Harish Kumar Sejekan.

Last Friday, the 35-year-old rapper-turned-politician won the Nepalese general election in a landslide victory, gaining a majority in the House of Representatives for the first time since 1999 and is now at the doorstep of emerging as the Prime Minister."It's a feeling that words cannot describe. I think it will just turn into hugs and tears when we finally meet him. We are proud as a family," he effuses.

The youngest of the three siblings, Balen grew up with Sujata and Kaushal Shah, who spotted his leadership traits early on. "Balen is a born leader. Even so, when he entered politics, it was a surprise for the family. Later, we realised it was the most valid thing," says Sujata, also a city-based freelance artist.

The period leading up to Shah's current political milestone has been emotionally complex for the family. "Around last December, we lost my father-in-law. It's a bittersweet moment. He would have been very proud. It has been a difficult time, but Balen is an emotionally strong person and remained so throughout," shares Harish, further, saying, "He has always believed in putting the country first. Everything else comes after that."

An art connoisseur, Harish had recently shared a video capturing Shah's journey on social media. The video was his way of expressing affection and admiration, he notes, stating, "Sujata and I couldn't travel during the elections because of family responsibilities. So, this was our way of showing support. We have seen him grow from a young boy to the person he is today."

A selfie of Harish Kumar Sejekan and Balen Shah during RCB-MI match in 2017

Harish Kumar Sejekan, Sujata Sah Sejekan (top) and Kaushal Shah with Balen Shah

Balen Shah with his immediate family

Balen Shah (right) with his siblings Sujata Sah Sejekan and Kaushal Shah

Rap to Rapport

Shah pursued his master's in Structural Engineering at the Nitte Meenakshi Institute of Technology in Yelahanka. According to Harish, he lived a simple, disciplined life during his time in the city, splitting his stay between the family home and the hostel. "He was a diligent student. His professors used to appreciate his dedication. Even back then, his thoughts were always centred around the country," Harish shares. Not surprisingly, Shah was involved in efforts to construct nearly 2,000 homes in Nepal following the 2025 earthquake.

Despite the demanding academic schedule, Shah's Bengaluru days were far from just a monotonous one. Harish remembers travelling across Karnataka with him. "Balen loved the weather here, just like everyone else," he says with a smile. Shah also made an effort to embrace the local culture. Harish recalls that he picked up some Kannada during his stay. "He always felt that wherever you live, you should respect the culture and people of that city," he says. Food became one of the parts of that cultural immersion, as Balen developed a fondness for South Indian staples, particularly dosaes and traditional meals.

Even outside of academics, before politics entered the picture, he was known for his rap music, which often tackled social and political themes. "His songs were never just for fun. They were a way of communicating the issues people were facing," says Harish before he concludes.

LEGACY IN EVERY NOTE

TEJAL SINHA

In conversation with CE, singer Faiz Mustafa opens up on collaboration with AR Rahman for Zara Zara, calling it one that carries a lot of musical emotions

CARRYING a legacy as towering as that of late Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan could easily feel daunting. For singer Faiz Mustafa, however, it has become a guiding compass. Rooted in classical training and shaped by the musical wisdom of one of India's most revered *gharanas*, Mustafa who often performs in Bengaluru, is steadily carving his own space in the industry.

Born into a distinguished musical lineage, Mustafa carries forward the legacy of his grandfather, Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan, who mentored icons such as AR Rahman, Sonu Nigam, Hariharan and Shaan.

Now, with *Zara Zara* from the silent film *Gandhi Talks*, Faiz lends his voice to actors Vijay Sethupathi and Aditi Rao Hydari in a composition by AR Rahman that is steadily winning hearts across platforms. "As it's a silent film, music becomes the key... a source of peace for everyone in today's time. People will definitely love it. And when it's a Rahman musical, you know the audience will connect with every aspect," Mustafa says thoughtfully.

For him, approaching *Zara Zara* was about restraint and emotional honesty. "My approach while dubbing the song was simple – to convey the required amount of feeling. That feeling depends on the situation in the storyline and the lyrics. For me, the soul of the lyrics and the music matter the most. *Zara Zara* carries a lot of musical emotion. The lyrics have depth and portray human emotions such as hope, love, trust and togetherness. It is beautifully penned by Nirmika Singh," he says.

Mustafa's association with Rahman dates back to his childhood. At just 12, he performed at Coke Studio, singing *Aao Balma* alongside his grandfather and the maestro. When he first heard the composition for *Zara Zara*, he approached it almost like a study. "I heard the entire tune five to six times to understand the scanning of the song. I was super excited, while also controlling my emotions, thinking this could turn out to be my very first romantic song for a Bollywood film," he shares.

Interestingly, he only discovered midway through recording that his voice would be picturised on Sethupathi. "When I found out that Sethupathi would be acting on my voice, I immediately told myself, 'Faiz, you need to give your best vocally.' Being a fan of his work, I felt super excited. He is a master of expressions," he says.

The recording itself was done remotely. "I recorded the song at KM Studios in Mumbai while Rahman uncle was in Chennai, and we connected over a video call. It's always a learning experience whenever I work with him, whether during recordings or live shows," Mustafa recalls. Beyond technique, Rahman's mentorship has deeply influenced him, "Rahman uncle's guidance, whether musical or personal, has helped me evolve not just as a singer but also as a human being. Listening to his work, from *Roja* and *Bombay* to *Rockstar* and *Highway*, and witnessing that musical evolution has helped me immensely." At the core of Mustafa's artistry lies the foundation laid by his grandfather. "My grandfather always said that I am a student of music and should remain one till my last breath. The lessons he taught us were to work hard and stay grounded. He also believed that music is a universal language, and different genres are like different chapters of the same subject," he shares.

From *Heropanti 2* to *Maidaan* and now *Gandhi Talks*, Mustafa's journey reflects curiosity rather than confinement. " Music excites me the most," he says.

Faiz Mustafa

CITY READ

ENTER THE CHUTNEY-VERSE PG 3

Author Vikram Sampath, musician Mysore Manjunath and technologist Rohini Shrivathsa are all smiles as they share stage at the launch of *Nanna Hesaru Gauhar Jaan's* Kannada version translated by Naav AI. Read full report in *CE* on Tuesday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Exhibition brings handicrafts to Bengaluru ahead of Ugadi

The Meena Bazar exhibition, which recently kicked off at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Kumarakrupa Road, is set to bring artisan-made products under one roof till March 29. The exhibition, organised in collaboration with The Grand Fila Market and Indian Artisans Bazaar, features home decor items including decorative lights, curtains, furniture, antique idols and religious statues, Rajasthani-style clothing, earrings, handicraft products and more. Being held ahead of Ugadi, the event was innaugurated by content creator Shruti Praveen.

College hosts international life skills conference

Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University) organised the International Conference on Life Skills Education with The Human Touch in the Age of AI: Cultivating Essential Life Skills as the central theme, on March 12. A Radhakrishnan Nair, founder and president of Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE), New Delhi, was one of the chief speakers. Addressing students, he traced the origin of life skills, touched on frameworks of life skills education, emphasised the importance of empathy and cautioned against allowing AI to dominate human thought processes. Fr Jais V Thomas, chief finance officer of Kristu Jayanti, delivered the presidential address, while Prathap G, convenor of the conference, described life skills as essential for unlocking India's potential. Jonas Richard, professor and head, Department of Social Work at Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Dhanapal, co-convenor, was also present.

BOOK NOOK

iParent
by Neha Hiranandani

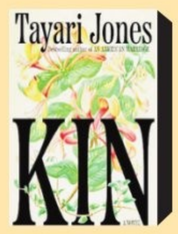
Backed by research, conversations and personal reflection, a practical guide for parents whose children are born into the digitally advanced world, exploring both the risks and benefits of the online world.

Little One
by Olivia Muenter

A haunting tale of survival, manipulation and the unbreakable bonds of sisterhood.

The Autobiography of Cotton
by Cristina Rivera Garza

A lyrical blend of history, memoir and poetry, an inspiring recount of the author's grandparents' experience during slavery, labour activism, cross-border migration and environmental degradation.



Kin
by Tayari Jones

A follow-up to the novel *An American Marriage*, which features relationship of mothers and daughters, lost friendships and the complexities of being a woman in the American South.

FUTURE FORWARD

A glimpse of a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle displayed at the recently-held Japan–India Mobility Summit 2026 event at Taj West End, Race Course Road | KEVIN NASHON

QUICKFIX

CHECKERBOARD BUTTER COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- **Butter (room temperature):** 150 g
- **Powdered sugar:** ½ cup
- **Vanilla extract:** 1 tsp
- **Maida (all-purpose flour):** 2 cups
- **Salt:** A pinch
- **Milk:** 3 to 4 tbsp
- **Cocoa powder:** 1 tbsp

METHOD

- In a bowl, beat the butter and powdered sugar until light and creamy. Add vanilla extract and salt. Mix well.
- Add flour gradually and knead into a soft dough. Divide the dough into two portions.
- Mix cocoa powder into one portion (add a little milk if needed). Keep the other portion plain vanilla.
- Roll both doughs into equal rectangular slabs. Stack and arrange alternating strips of vanilla and chocolate dough to form a checkerboard pattern.
- Wrap and refrigerate the dough log for about 20-30 minutes for easy slicing.
- Slice into cookies and place on a lined baking tray. Bake in a preheated oven at 200°C for 13-15 minutes.

Contributed by **Gomathi Karthisen,** Chennai

ASK AN XPERT

DR VIVEK ARORA

The expert is a senior veterinarian, Crown Vet, Delhi.

My 2-year-old female cat stays indoors for a good period of the day. Is this normal/unusual? How do I make her energetic?

It's normal for a two-year-old indoor cat to spend much of the day sleeping or resting, as cats typically sleep 12-16 hours daily. Low activity is not a concern unless you notice changes in appetite, weight or behaviour. To boost her energy, offer interactive toys, puzzle feeders, climbing trees and short daily play sessions of 10-15 minutes. Brief bursts of activity mimic natural hunting behaviour and support healthy weight and muscle tone. Rotating toys and using laser pointers, wand toys or treat-dispensing games can keep indoor life engaging and stimulating.

FITBIT

LATERAL RAISE VARIATIONS FOR STRONGER SHOULDERS

The lateral raise is one of the most effective exercises for building shoulder strength and definition. It involves lifting weights outward from the sides of the body, primarily targeting the lateral deltoids – the muscles responsible for shoulder width and stability.

WHY LATERAL RAISES MATTER

- **Targets the side deltoids:** The exercise isolates the lateral head of the deltoid, helping develop broader and stronger shoulders.
- **Improves shoulder stability:** Strong deltoids support shoulder joints and enhance performance in many upper-body movements.
- **Enhances upper-body aesthetics:** Well-developed side deltoids create a rounded shoulder appearance and balanced physique.
- **Supports other exercises:** Strong shoulders help improve pressing and pulling movements in strength training.

EFFECTIVE LATERAL RAISE VARIATIONS

1. Charles Glass Lateral Raise

- Instead of holding weights beside the body, they begin slightly in front of the thighs with palms facing inward.
- Helps keep the shoulder blades relaxed and allows smoother movement through the lift.

2. Behind-the-Body Cable Lateral Raise

- Creates constant tension throughout the exercise and allows a deeper stretch in the shoulder muscles.

3. Wall Press Lateral Raise

- One side of the body is pressed against a wall while the opposite arm performs the raise.
- The wall prevents momentum or body swinging, forcing the shoulder muscles to work harder and improving movement control.

4. Y Raise

- Performed on an incline bench, this movement raises the arms in a 'Y' shape rather than directly sideways.
- Activates the shoulders and upper back while also helping improve shoulder mobility and stability

The lateral raise remains a foundational shoulder exercise because of its ability to isolate and strengthen the side deltoids. By focusing on proper form and controlled movement, individuals can build stronger, more stable shoulders and enhance overall upper-body training results.

By Chandrashekar Gajawelli, fitness expert, cult — a fitness and wellness platform

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

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WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Getting Sportive

Join a 75-minute basketball session curated for anyone who loves the game. Play friendly games in a lively setting, ease your coordination and practise fundamental drills. This session emphasises activity, teamwork and having fun with the game, regardless of your level of experience.

WHEN: March 16, 6.45am

WHERE: MN Krishna Rao Basketball Court, Basavanagudi

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

First Impressions

Discover how to create a powerful online persona. Storytelling, online presence and self-assurance in professional presentation are all covered in this engaging workshop. Perfect for students, artists and business owners who want to improve their abilities and communicate clearly.

WHEN: March 16, 11am

WHERE: Bhive Premium Brigade Metropolis, Mahadevapura

CALL: 95386 77774

Mic and Music

Enter a private karaoke room and spend the entire day singing your favourite songs, whether they are new or classic hits. Enjoy a laid-back singing session while selecting from a large song library.

WHEN: March 16, 10am onwards

WHERE: Casa Karaoke, JP Nagar

CALL: 80886 51810

Date Night

Step into an intimate evening designed for couples. The romantic dinner offers a refined setting with elegant ambience and curated dining. The experience is open to guests aged 21 and above. **WHEN:** March 16, 11.30am

WHERE: La Gioia, Indirangar

CALL: 99000 92301

Paper Play

Try a tissue-texture art workshop and learn how to create simple textured artwork using tissue paper and colours. The session is guided step by step, and all materials are provided. Suitable for beginners and anyone interested in art. Participants can take home their artwork.

WHEN: March 16, 2pm

WHERE: Third Space Art Cafe and Community, SG Palya

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Nostalgia Reimagined

Relive the nostalgia of the circus with a modern touch. The show brings together performers who blend skill, balance and theatre to create a lively experience for all ages. An evening filled with displays of talent and entertainment. **WHEN:** March 16, 1pm onwards

WHERE: Jumbo Circus, KR Puram

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Giggles Galore

Enjoy an evening of stand-up as Bengaluru comedians take the stage with punchy humour and lively crowd banter. The show brings together a line-up of comics delivering quick wit and plenty of laughs.

WHEN: March 16, 9pm

WHERE: Ministry of Comedy, Koramangala

DETAILS: district.in

ARTCORNER

UNUSUAL GEOGRAPHIES

Deepa Kumawat paints a surreal composition of a monumental plateau, piercing through a golden landscape

IN BENGALURU RECENTLY, RUSHINA MUNSHAW-GHILDIYAL TALKS ABOUT HER LATEST BOOK, *CHUTNEY: A COMPENDIUM OF STORIES AND RECIPES*

ENTER THE CHUTNEY-VERSE

RAKSHITHA PRIYA G

IN homes across India, chutney isn't just a side dish. It is memory ground into paste. It is improvisation, inheritance and instinct. Say the word 'chutney' out loud, and what comes to mind? For a Bengalurean, perhaps coconut and pudina churned with green chillies and tempered with mustard seeds. For someone from Andhra, a tangy gongura pacchadi. For a Maharashtrian, a thecha that clings to bhakri. For a coastal kitchen, maybe even dried prawns or crab. Different in tastes, preference, consistency, ingredients, methods, yet still the dish resonates with the whole country. Chronicling all these in her latest book *Chutney: A Compendium of Stories and Recipes* (₹3,500, A Perfect Bite Consulting), Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal, a culinary consultant and chronicler, unfolds about the experience.

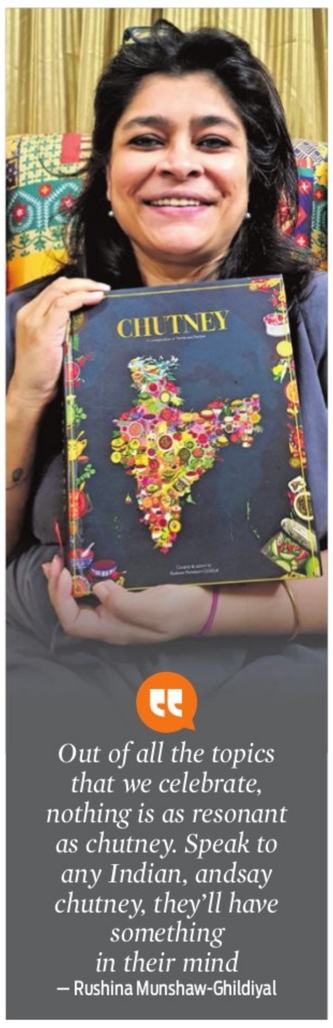
"Out of all the topics that we celebrate, nothing is as resonant as chutney. Speak to any Indian, and say chutney, they'll have something to share," says the award-winning author who was in conversation with hospitality professional Aslam Gafoor recently.

Unlike the slim cookbooks, at over 500 pages, this is an 'encyclopedia' of chutneys. What began as part of her Indian Food Observance Day initiative, a calendar that celebrated concepts like dal, masala, and achaar, slowly thickened into something more ambitious. Years of collecting recipes, history, memories and regional variations found their way into a single volume that moves from the north Himalayas to the southern coasts.

But why chutney?

"Chutney was a confluence of different things that made it happen, but it was very resonant in my opinion. I felt that the best format to showcase this large repository of information was a book," she shares.

The book encounters everything from coriander and coconut classics to chutneys made of preserved limes, dried fish, keema, and even ants in certain indigenous traditions. The book opens with the fundamentals – ingredients, tools, hits – before mapping regional and community-specific chutneys across India. There are sections on festivals and street food, and even a chapter on how chutney travelled beyond borders during colonial trade. "I was clear that I wanted real voices. In a day and era of Instagram, AI and Google, I didn't want to just take information from there. We worked very hard to find people who could give us recipes from all over," the author says, adding that the book brings together chutney traditions from almost every state and region in India, while also highlighting communities like the Parsis and Sindhis whose contributions extend beyond regional boundaries.



Out of all the topics that we celebrate, nothing is as resonant as chutney. Speak to any Indian, andsay chutney, they'll have something in their mind
— Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal

For Munshaw-Ghildiyal, one of the most fascinating discoveries in the South was Tamil Nadu's 'travel chutneys', a robust, long-lasting blends packed for train journeys. "I was fascinated by that," she says. "So many people across the South have these as part of their family repertoire."

And yes, the ammikal (a traditional South Indian manual stone grinder), makes an appearance with many of its alias. "When you use an ammikal or silbatta, the motion breaks down the vessels of the material you're using. Most machines today are finely chopping. The rubbing of the ingredients between the stones breaks down the cells and brings out moisture in a way blades don't. That's why it tastes better," she explains, validating every person who ever insisted on mortar supremacy.

But she is also quick to add a modern lens. "We romanticise the silbatta, but we don't think about the labour that goes into it." In that single sentence lies the unspoken history of kitchens and of the women who powered them. "Usually, it's like 'nani's recipe' or 'mummy's recipe' and it stays in the family. Through this book, we've actually put down these women's recipes with their names. Some have passed on, but their families gave us the recipes. Today, they're written down. They're going to stay alive."

When asked about the most challenging part, she laughs, saying, "Stopping. Somewhere around 525 pages, my husband was like, 'Okay, enough now.'" The first print run of 1,000 copies is already close to selling out, with readers buying multiple copies as gifts. "Chutney is a very friendly topic. You don't need special tools or ingredients. You can crush garlic and chilli with your hands and make a chutney."

Perhaps that is the real reason it endures. Chutney bends to what is in season, what is growing in the backyard, or what is left over from yesterday's meal, making it a versatile staple all across the world.

Photo: Supriya Arun

ANGAYA PODI

(Digestive chutney powder) [From Tamil Nadu] by Soumya Arjun

Ingredients

- Coriander seeds: ½ cup
- Black peppercorns: 2 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 3 tsp
- Dried vepampoo (neem flowers): ½ cup
- Dried sundakkai (turkey berries): ¼ cup
- Dried manathakalikai (black nightshade berries): ¼ cup
- Curry leaves: 2-3 sprigs
- Compound asafoetida: 1 tsp
- Dry red chillies (optional): 3-4
- Salt: to taste

Method

In a heavy, wide pan set on a medium flame, dry roast the coriander seeds, black peppercorns, cumin seeds, vepampoo, sundakkai, manathakalikai, curry leaves and dry red chillies (if using), one by one, till they are well roasted and aromatic. Ensure that the spices are roasted golden brown, and the rest of the ingredients are roasted till they are dark brown and crisp. Set aside to cool on a wide plate. Once completely cool, transfer the roasted ingredients to a blender jar. Add asafoetida and salt, and grind to make a powder in the texture of fine sugar. Do not grind hot or warm ingredients, as they will clump and result in an uneven texture. Pour the prepared chutney powder back on to the plate and cool completely. Once cool, transfer to an air-tight container Store in a dry place, away from sunlight, for up to 3 months. Serve the chutney with warm sesame oil.

MUDARE PAJJI

(Horsegram chutney) [From Karnataka] by Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal

Ingredients

- Horsegram: 3 tbsp, toasted
- Fresh coconut: 1 cup, grated
- Dry red chillies: 4, seeds removed
- 1 lime-sized ball of tamarind, strings and seeds discarded
- Salt: to taste
- Water: 3-4 tbsp

Method

In a blender jar or mortar, combine the toasted horsegram, grated coconut, dry red chillies, tamarind and salt, and grind to a thick, smooth paste, using a few spoons of water if needed. Transfer to an air-tight container and store refrigerated.

KAYI BELLA

(Coconut jaggery chutney) [From Karnataka] by Soumya Arjun

Ingredients

- Fresh coconut: ¾ cup, grated
- Jaggery: 2-3 tbsp, grated or powdered
- Cardamom powder: ¼ tsp
- A pinch of salt

Method

In a wide bowl, combine the fresh coconut, jaggery, cardamom powder and salt, and mash together with your hands to release a bit of milk from the coconut, making a juicy chutney. Transfer to a serving bowl and serve immediately. **Note:** If using thawed frozen coconut, combine the ingredients in a pan over a low flame, or in a bowl placed over hot water.

LASANIYU

(Chilli garlic chutney) [From Gujarat] by Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal

Ingredients

- Garlic: 1 cup, peeled
- Kashmiri chilli powder: 3 tsp, toasted
- Reshampatti chilli powder: 3 tsp, toasted
- Vegetable oil: 1 tbsp
- Cumin powder: 1 tsp, toasted
- Salt: to taste

Method

Combine the garlic, chilli powders, vegetable oil, cumin powder and salt in a mortar and pound to a coarse, thick paste. Roll the mixture into small marble-sized balls and refrigerate in an air-tight container.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS **CLASSIFIEDS**

PUBLIC NOTICE
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, MANGIKUPPE GOWDAIAH GIRISHA, Aged about 51 years, S/o Late. Gowdaiah, Resident at No. 277, Ganganadi Road, Brundavan Nagar, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru-560019, have changed my name from **MANGIKUPPE GOWDAIAH GIRISHA to M G GIRISH** vide affidavit dated 13-03-2026 sworn before notary H G Padmanabha Rao, Reg. No.12464, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHILPA CHATTER**, W/o Siddaramesha Chatter, R/at No.27, Ekadantha Nilaya, Annapoorneshwari Temple Road, Jnanabharathi 4th Block, Nagadevanahalli, Bengaluru-560 056 do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SHILPA** (old name) to **SHILPA CHATTER** (new name), henceforth I shall be known and called as **SHILPA CHATTER** (new name) for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 13-03-2026, sworn before Advocate and Notary **K.C. GOWTHAMI** at Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, Swatantra Kumar Srivastava, S/o Jitendra Kumar, residing at No. 35/18, 2nd Floor, 13th A Main Road, N.S. Palya, B.T.M. 2nd Stage, Bengaluru – 560076, hereby declare that my name is written as **SWATANTRA KUMAR SRIVASTAVA** in my Aadhaar Card, PAN Card, Driving Licence and other records, whereas my name is written as **SWATANTRA KUMAR SRIVASTAV** in my 10th Marks Card. Both the names **SWATANTRA KUMAR SRIVASTAVA** and **SWATANTRA KUMAR SRIVASTAV** refer to one and the same person, i.e., myself. I have executed an Affidavit dated **07.03.2026** before Notary **B. H. Rajendra**, Bengaluru, declaring that both the names belong to me.

CHANGE OF NAME
I. VITTAL NIMBANNAVAR, S/o Late Dyamanna, Aged about 55 years, R/at No. NA-349, old BEL Colony, Jalahalli Village & Post, Bangalore - 560 013, I declare that in the official records of my 3 childrens **(1) Akshata V.N. (2) Praveen V.N. (3) Aishwarya V.N.** the initial of mine is left out and to add initial **V.N.,** also my wife name **Thangemma** is mentioned and it should be changed as **Thangemma Vittal Nimbannavar,** vide affidavit dated 4/3/2026 sworn to before XXXVIII Addl Chief Judicial Magistrate Bengaluru City

CHANGE OF NAME
I, G SYED MUSTAQ AHAMED, Aged about 73 years, S/O. Syed Ahamed Hussain, Residing at No. 204, 1st Floor, 3rd Main, Devaraj Arasu Nagar, Old Guddada Halli, Po: Govt. Electric Factory, Bangalore - 560026
I have changed my name from
SYED MUSHTAQ AHAMED to G SYED MUSTAQ AHAMED
for all purposes affidavit dated 13/03/2026 sworn before advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain .K, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
We, Mr. MURALI KUMAR M, aged about 50 years, S/o. Muniswamappa, and Mrs. Dr.SREEBRUNDA S, aged about 43 years, W/o. Murali Kumar M, Both are Residing at No. 17, "SAMYUDYATHA", 19th Cross, 8th Main, CHBS Layout, Vijayanagar, Bengaluru 560040, we have changed our son's name from
PARINEETH M. to ARAV VINMAY M
for all purposes affidavit dated 13/03/2026 sworn before advocate and notary Deepa .M, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
We, **KARTHEEK ANANDAM** and **SUREKHA KAVALI** parents of **Anandam Naga Jaswitha,** residing at Flat No. B107, MRG Bliss, Manipal County Road, Singasandra, Bangalore – 560068 hereby declare that in our daughter **Anandam Naga Jaswitha** school record her name is mentioned as **A NAGA JASWITHA** instead of **ANANDAM NAGA JASWITHA**. Name has been rectified as said above vide affidavit dated 14-03-2026 before B.M. Chandrashekar, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SHIRLY YESUDAS, wife of Yesudas also known as Yesudasan, presently residing at G11 Lewis Glorious, Essel Garden, Near Ekya School, Doddagubbi Main Road, Doddagubbi, P.O. Kothanur, Bengaluru-560077, Karnataka, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under That I hereby declare that both the aforesaid names **"SHIRLY YESUDAS"** and **"SHIRLY YESUDASAN"** refer to one and the same person, namely myself, Shirly Yesudas, wife of Yesudas also known as Yesudasan, dated 11-03-2026, sworn before me Notary **I. Y.R. CHANDRASEKAR** at Bangaloe.

CHANGE OF NAME
I,**Nithin S. K.** (Old Name), S/o Krishna S.K. aged about 34 years, residing at Flat No.304, GR Onxy Apartment,, 2nd B Main Road, KHB Industrial Area, Yelahanka New Town, Bengaluru - 560 064, have changed my name as **NITIN S. K.** (New Name) vide affidavit dated 07.03.2026 sworn before Advocate & Notary Uma Maheswari M. N., Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **RAGHAV NARASINHA**, resident of M I G - 11, KHB Colony, Prabath Nagar, Honnavara, Uttar Kannada - 581 334, KARNATAKA, INDIA, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **RAGHAV** to **RAGHAV NARASINHA** vide affidavit dated 14.03.2026 sworn to before H.S. Sakalesh Aradhya, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, M CHITRA, C/o. M Suresh Kumar, Aged about 37 years, Residing at No.06, Ragavappa Garden, near ITC Colony, Cox Town, Jeevanahalli, Fraser Town, Bengaluru-560005,
I have changed my name from
CHITRA SURESH to M CHITRA
for all purposes affidavit dated 14/03/2026 sworn before advocate and notary K. Venkatesh, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Firdose Begum, age about 37 Years, W/o. Waseem, Residing at No. 171, 12th Cross, Modi Road, DJ Halli Arabic College Post, Bangalore-560045.
have changed my name to
FIRDOUS BEGUM
for all purposes affidavit dated 13/03/2026 sworn before advocate and notary Meer Hassan, Bangalore

NAME CHANGE
I, **SHASHIDHAR SRINIVAS,** S/o Srinivas.S, aged about 50 years, Residing at 15/1, 1st Floor, 2nd Cross, Chikka Gangappa Layout, Hennur Village, Hennur Cross Road, Kalyannagar, Bengaluru-560043, declare that my name is Recorded as SHASHIDHAR.S in my Driving Licence. But in my Aadhar Card, PAN Card, Voter I D, R C Card, Degree Certificate my name is Mentioned as SHASHIDHAR SRINIVAS So both the names **SHASHIDHAR S** & **SHASHIDHAR SRINIVAS** are one & the same belongs to me only vide affidavit dated 13-03-2026 sworn before notary B. Prasanna Bangalore. Henceforth I shall be Known as **SHASHIDHAR SRINIVAS** in all my future Documents.

AFFIDAVIT
I, Lakshmi Bharathi Gaddam, W/ o. Ravi Kumar Chundi, aged 35 years, residing at #DG-02, ND Passion Elite, Haralur Main Road, Kudlu, Bommanahalli Po, Bangalore-560068,
It is hereby informed that the father's name of **Chundi Shourya Reddy** was wrongly mentioned as **Ravikumar Reddy Chundi** in the school records.
The correct father's name is **Ravi Kumar Chundi.**
Henceforth, the father's name should be read as **Ravi Kumar Chundi** for all records and purposes.
Vide affidavit dated 14/03/2026 sworn before advocate and notary B.M. Chandrashekar, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHIVARAJ KATTIMANI,** residing at Flat No. 108, 1st Floor, DS Max Serenity Nest, NGR Layout, Roopena Agrahara, Bommanahalli, Bangalore South, Bangalore hereby state that my Daughter's name in School Records mentioned as **AARADHYAA KATTIMANI,** instead of **AARADHYAA S KATTIMANI.** Name has been rectified as said above vide affidavit dated 14-03-2026 before Notary B. Chitra, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **BABY,** D/O Manjunatha, aged about 18 years, residing at Byadarahalli village, BD Pura Post, Koratagere Taluk,Tumakuru District, Karnataka, hereby submit that in my Aadhar card my name has been wrongly printed as **BEBY"** instead of the correct spelling **"BABY",** Therefore, I request the concerned authority to correct the spelling of my name from "Beby" to "Baby" in my Aadhar card to avoid difficulties while obtaining and updating other necessary documents such as educational certificates, Bank records and Government records. dated 13-03-2026, sworn before me Notary **I. B.R.NARAYANA GOWDA** at Kunigal.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MOUNESHWAR V BADIGER** aged about 53 years, doing LIC Agent, S/o Late.Vithal V Badiger & Smt.Nagarathna, resident of No.13, 14th Main, 8th Cross, Maruthi Layout, Indira Colony, Attiguppe, RPC Layout, Bangalore North, Bangalore - 560040, have changed my name from **MOUNESHWAR BADIGER** to **MOUNESHWAR V BADIGER,** vide affidavit dated 11/3/2026 sworn to before H S Sakalesh Aradhya Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **KAVITA JANGIR** spouse of RAJKISHOR resident of H No. 14, 16th Cross Road, Sanjay Nagar, Bangalore - 560094 have changed my Name from **KAVITA JANGIR** to **KAVITA KUMARI** vide Affidavit dated 09-03-2026.

CHANGE OF NAME
We, Mr. MURALI KUMAR M, aged about 50 years, S/o. Muniswamappa, and Mrs. Dr.SREEBRUNDA S, aged about 43 years, W/o. Murali Kumar M, Both are Residing at No. 17, "SAMYUDYATHA", 19th Cross, 8th Main, CHBS Layout, Vijayanagar, Bengaluru 560040, we have changed our son's name from
AASHITH SHIVAM M. to AARYAN VAIBAV M
for all purposes affidavit dated 13/03/2026 sworn before advocate and notary Deepa .M, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VENKATESH A.**, S/o. Anjinappa. H. No #48/18, 8th Cross, 8th B Main, Venkatapura, Koramangala, Bangalore – 560034 hereby state that in my daughter's school record her name is mentioned as **HARSHITHA** instead of **HARSHITHA V.** Name has been rectified as said above vide affidavit dated 14-02-2026 before Notary K.V. Mani, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Venkatesh Kumar.C.K** S/o C.Krishnaiah Setty residing at Samruudhi, No.35, 3rd Main Palace Guttahalli, Bangalore -560003 hereby state that three names **C.K Venkatesh Kumar, Venkatesh Kumar.C.K** and **Venkatesh Kumar Chintalapalli**, belong to me only. I am the same person called by these three names. I also declare that I am generally called by name Venkatesh Kumar C.K and that in all future correspondence and documents I will use **Venkatesh Kumar C.K** as my name. Vide affidavit dated:10/7/2025 sworn before Notary M.Venkataraman, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Sri.Adinarayanareddy.S.R S/o. Ramachandrareddy, aged about 64 years, R/at; No.68, Mallepalli Village, Billur post, Bagepalli Taluk, Chikkaballapura district -563125, I declare that below mentioned both names **"Adinarayanareddy"** and **"Adinarayanareddy S.R."** refer to one and the same person, i.e., myself, vide affidavit dated 9/3/2026 sworn to before Ravi Kumar V Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Smt. LAKSHMI .T.L** W/o Lalith.T.G R/a. Old House No.450 and New No.575, Veeradrabhappanapete, Tank Road, Doddaballapura Town, has changed My name from **LAKSHMI.N.G** to **LAKSHMI.T.L** vide affidavit sworn before Notary, **S.Chandrashekar** dated 14/03/2026, Doddaballapura, Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **RISHONA JULIAN,** aged about 21 years, D/o Mr. P Joseph Julian, presently residing at Site No.9, Pauls Enclave, KRC Circle, Doddagubbi Main Road, Opposite to Nester Earth, Kothanur, Dr.Shivarama Karanth Nagar Post, Bangalore East Taluk, Bengaluru-560 077, declare that my name is wrongly mentioned as **RISHONA JOSEPH JULIAN** in my passport due to an inadvertent error. My correct name is **RISHONA JULIAN** as per all my other records. Henceforth **RISHONA JOSEPH JULIAN AND RISHONA JULIAN** refer to one and the same person. vide affidavit dated 14/03/2026 sworn before advocate and notary D. Rajanna, Bangalore

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AFTER *SU FROM SO*, I HEARD ABOUT 40 SCRIPTS: SHANEEL GAUTHAM

The actor gears up for his second Kannada outing, directed by Chandra Mohan and produced by BK Gangadhar, revealing he has finalised nine projects, all with him in the lead

Shaneel Gautham

A SHARADHAA

AFTER catching attention with his spirited turn in *Su From So*, actor Shaneel Gautham is preparing for his second Kannada outing, one he hopes will reveal a different side of him. The upcoming film will be directed by *Bombay Mittai* and *Double Engine* filmmaker Chandra Mohan and produced by BK Gangadhar, with shooting expected to begin in April.

The actor says the warm reception to his previous film came with its own expectations. Rather than repeating the mannerisms audiences associated with his popular character Ravi Anna, Shaneel says he is consciously moving toward something new.

"I received a lot of love for *Su From So*. But the character I played there belonged to that film and to Ravi Anna. I don't want to repeat the same style. I want to explore different genres and attempt something fresh," he says.

According to Shaneel, the initial idea for the new film came from producer Uday Mehta, and it was developed further by director Chandra Mohan. The actor adds that he spent considerable time working with the filmmaker before stepping into the role.

"Uday Mehta gave the original plot line, which Chandra Mohan later developed. I have spent nearly five months with the director discussing the story. I sat through the prime phase of the script to ensure the film would shape up well. I hope the execution reflects that effort," he explains.

The film is being pitched as a family dramedy, a space Shaneel believes offers room for both entertainment and performance. "The core subject that Chandra Mohan has written is very good. It will be a family drama with humour, something audiences can enjoy. If I achieve what we have imagined, it can turn into another good film," he says.

The project will feature music by Prashanth Shetty and cinematography by Chandrasekaran, who also worked on *Su From So*. The cast also includes Prakash Thuminad, Deepak Rai Panaje, and *Sa.Hi.Pra Shaale*-fame Ranjan.

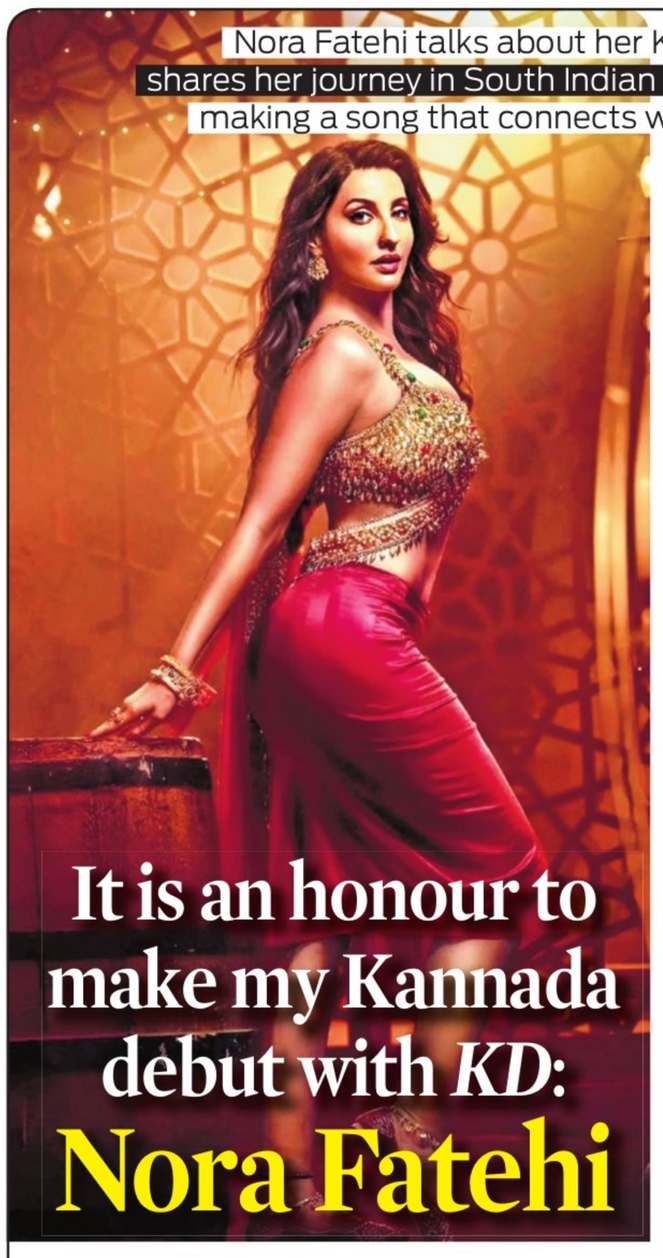
Chandra Mohan

Shaneel reveals that the success of *Su From So*, produced by Raj B Shetty, has opened several doors. "After the film, I heard around 40 scripts and have shortlisted nearly nine projects as a lead. Many of them are set in different regions and genres, so I will have to train myself to get the authenticity right," he says.

Interestingly, the actor has also turned down a few offers that leaned toward negative roles. "I was approached for some negative characters, but I decided not to take them up right now. People have recognised me as Ravi Anna, and I want to continue in a positive direction for the moment," he notes.

For Shaneel, however, the focus remains simple. "All we want is honesty in every film we make. That honesty is what audiences saw in *Su From So*, and I want to be part of films that carry the same spirit," he says.

Nora Fatehi talks about her Kannada debut as she shares her journey in South Indian cinema and the art of making a song that connects with various audiences



It is an honour to make my Kannada debut with *KD*: Nora Fatehi

A still from the film

CE FEATURES

THE team behind *KD: The Devil* launched the film's fourth song, Sarse Sarse Ninna Seraga Sarise, which is picturised on Nora Fatehi, who makes her Kannada debut with this special dance number. The lyrical video was launched at an energetic event by Rakshita Prem, along with Dhruva Sarja, director Prem, composer Arjun Janya, Nora, and actor Reeshma Nanaiah.

Speaking about her journey in South Indian cinema and the art of creating a song that resonates with different audiences, Nora candidly admitted that the opportunity came as a surprise. Addressing director Prem, she remarked that it was clear why he was known as a showman. "I realised they are genuinely making an epic film. It is an honour to make my Kannada debut with *KD*. The song is massive," she stated.

A decade-long connection with the South

This film adds another chapter to Nora's growing relationship with South Indian cinema. Having worked across various industries, she has watched the rise and influence of South cinema over the years. "I entered South cinema in 2015, and since then, I've been involved in Telugu and Tamil cinema. Finally, I am part of Kannada cinema now, and I've seen how the industry has evolved, and the kind of impact it has today," she said.

Understanding the aura of a song

Known for her high-energy dance numbers, Nora believes that performing a special song goes beyond choreography. "Every song has a different energy, and it's important to grasp the right aura when you perform it. You need to bring the right attitude, vibe, and match the rhythm of the composition," said Nora, who features alongside Sanjay Dutt in the song. "It was very interesting working with Sanjay Dutt."

Beyond a dance number

Even though she is recognised for popular dance tracks, Nora said her focus is always on creating an impact. "For me, it's not just about being in a song. It's about making an impact. I try to bring star power, strong dance skills, and a strong screen presence so the song connects instantly," said Nora, who strongly believes that a song has the scope to expand beyond the film itself. "If the performance works, the song reaches everyone—men, women, and children. People start imitating the steps, and the song takes on a life of its own."

At the same time, she continues to pursue acting roles across films and platforms. "I've done some strong acting roles as well, but with special songs, I try to bring something different each time."

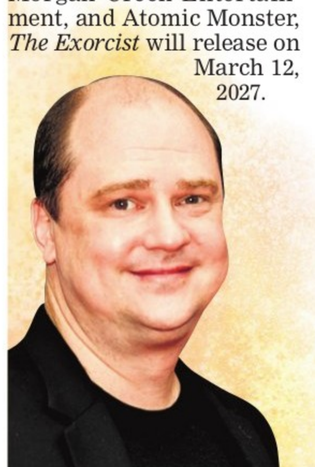
The Exorcist goes on floors

CE FEATURES

PRODUCTION has commenced on writer-director Mike Flanagan's The Exorcist, starring Scarlett Johansson and Jacobi Jupe of *Hamnet* fame in the lead roles. The production delay has pushed the film's planned March 2026 release to summer 2027. The upcoming movie is billed as a "radical new take" on William Friedkin's 1973 horror film.

The cast also includes Diane Lane, Laurence Fishburne, Chiwetel Ejiofor, John Leguizamo, Sasha Calle, Rahul Kohli, Gil Bellows, Hamish Linklater, Carl Lumbly, Benjamin Pajak, John Gallagher Jr, Robert Longstreet, Carla Gugino, Matt Biedel, Kate Siegel, and Samantha Sloyan.

The 1973 original revolves around the exorcism of a 12-year-old girl (Linda Blair) by a couple of priests. When the child starts to act violently and develop mysterious symptoms, her actor mother (Ellen Burstyn) asks a priest to perform an exorcism on her. Produced by Flanagan's Red Room Pictures, Jason Blum's Blumhouse, David Robinson's Morgan Creek Entertainment, and Atomic Monster, *The Exorcist* will release on March 12, 2027.



RAFTAAR GETS A JULY RELEASE

CE FEATURES

AMAZON MGM Studios has unveiled the release date for one of their upcoming projects, Raftaar, which stars Rajkummar Rao and Keerthy Suresh in the lead cast. Directed by debutant Aditya Nimbalkar, *Raftaar* will release in theatres on July 24. Produced by Patralekhaa under the Kampa Films banner, *Raftaar* is set in a high-stakes world where ambition builds empires, and success comes at a price. Besides Rajkummar and Keerthy, the film features Rajat Kapoor, Tanya Maniktala, Rohan Verma, and Anurag Thakur. The story and screenplay are penned by Rohan Narula. Irshad Kamil and Varun Grover are on board as lyricists, while the score is being composed by Sachet Parampara and Achint Thakar.

Team KD

Prem has a good sense of music: Rakshitha

RAKSHITA Prem, who launched the song, praised the filmmaker's understanding of music and spectacle. She pointed out that Prem's partnership with Arjun Janya has consistently produced memorable soundtracks. Composer Arjun Janya discussed the extensive work that went into the song and album. "The song uses retro instruments with a unique texture and was arranged in London. It has been a three-year journey."

Prem emphasised that storytelling remains the heart of cinema, regardless of its scale. "Whenever a film releases in theaters, no matter the language, the content is what counts," he said. Suprith from KVN Productions added that the team has put a lot of effort into the music and visuals. "With just a month to go for the film, excitement is building," he said.

Dhruva Sarja highlighted the detailed work behind the production. "This is the fourth song launch, and the film's foundation has been solidly built by the producer, director, and composer. You can see the effort," he said.

Actor Reeshma Nanaiah welcomed Nora Fatehi to Kannada cinema and praised the film's music. "The songs 'Shiva Shiva', 'Set Agalla', and 'Anthamma' are hits. 'Sarse Sarse' by Nora Fatehi is going to be a standout," she said. *KD: The Devil*, a gangster drama inspired by true events, is produced by Venkat K Narayan under KVN Productions. The film's cinematography is handled by William David. The cast includes Sanjay Dutt, Shilpa Shetty, V Ravichandran, Ramesh Aravind, Dhruva Sarja, and Reeshma Nanaiah. The film is set to release on April 30

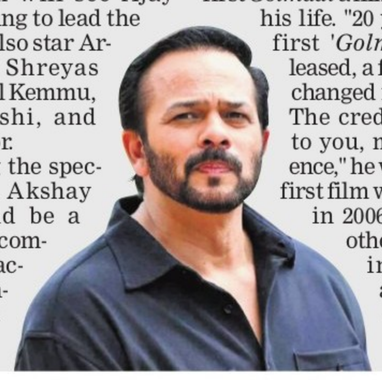
Rohit Shetty announces *Golmaal 5*

CE FEATURES

FILMMAKER Rohit Shetty announced the fifth instalment of the *Golmaal* franchise on Saturday, on the occasion of his 52nd birthday. The film will see Ajay Devgn returning to lead the cast and will also star Arshad Warsi, Shreyas Talpade, Kunal Kemmu, Sharman Joshi, and Tushar Kapoor.

Confirming the speculations that Akshay Kumar would be a part of this upcoming film, the actor, while wishing Rohit Shetty, shared that he is excited to join this "crazy family of *Golmaal 5*".

Rohit Shetty shared a lengthy note on his social media handle, accompanied by a behind-the-scenes video from the sets of the fifth instalment, and called the first *Golmaal* a film that changed his life. "20 years ago, the first '*Golmaal*' was released, a film that changed my life. The credit goes to you, my audience," he wrote. The first film was released in 2006, followed by other instalments in 2008, 2010, and 2017. Rohit directed all the films.



Alia Bhatt launches Eternal Kids

CE FEATURES

ALIA Bhatt's production company, Eternal Sunshine Productions, is expanding with a new initiative called *Eternal Kids*, which will focus on children's storytelling. Alia announced the new segment on Sunday, her 33rd birthday.

Sharing the update on social media, Alia revealed that the new venture already has multiple projects in the pipeline. "Our production company, Eternal Sunshine, just had a baby; say hello to *Eternal Kids*. We have three exciting projects lined up already," she wrote.

For starters, the production house is coming up with three titles: C and G and M, Oolangoo, and Adventures of Ed-a-Mamma.